

Attacks on food convoys

Renamo rebels killed three people in an ambush last week on a food aid convoy in the central Mozambican province of Manica, an official for the country's relief body, the Disasters Control Office (DPCCN) said.

The ferrying of drought relief has become an issue between the government and the rebels. Rebel spokesman at the Rome peace talks Raul Domingos is demanding that shipments to drought victims in Renamo-held areas should only be by air.

The government says the cost is around \$700 a tonne as against \$106 a tonne for road transport.

Last week it announced that convoys ferrying emergency supplies in Zambezi province will now be escorted by an "independent military force".

Meanwhile grain importers have been surprised by the success of Mozambique's ports of Beira and Maputo in handling the huge extra imports. Zimbabwe's Beira Corridor Group (BCG) said that in the first six weeks of drought relief movements through Beira, more than 95,000 tonnes of grain and stockfeed were transported to Zimbabwe by road and rail while a further 17,000 tonnes went into central Mozambique itself. The Limpopo rail corridor carried its first major import cargo since 1974 - 22,000 tonnes of maize, which was successfully moved over a period of three weeks.

• According to army chief Lt-Gen Antonio Hama Thai last week there were no signs that the rebels intended to cut back their military operations, despite fresh talks in Rome. [*Local reports*]