

30 July 2003

From our correspondent in
Cotonou (République Orange)



FOREIGNERS TO EVACUATE OIL FACILITIES

Foreign oil workers fleeing from Yellow have arrived in Avlame (Orange). M. Ashpreau, an Belgian citizen who used to work at the Madje Oil Research Centre (MORC) told our special envoy that living condition had become too harsh in the Hizan Kogede province for the non-Chawomba workers and especially for foreign citizens working in the oil sector.

He had thus to leave the province in a hurry without taking most of his belongings. M. Ashpreau added that he feared for his life. He said that the oil facilities, including the pumping station at the junction of the pipeline coming from Blue, were poorly taken care of and the oil flow could soon be interrupted if maintenance operations were not conducted rapidly.

When asked about the capability of the Chawombas to fix the problem, M. Ashpreau said that it was a specialist's job and that they were not.

Should the oil flow be interrupted, the economical situation of the three countries, especially Blue and Yellow, could soon become untenable. It seems urgent that the international community make a decision about actions to be taken to restore peace and stability in the region.