

The U.S. office of Renamo is headed by Luis Serapiao and Francisco Nota, who have close ties with the ultra-right Heritage Foundation run by Tom Schaaf and the conservative Senate lobby headed by Jesse Helms.

Fernandes' murder took place days before the release of the U.S. report whose author, Bob Gersony, likened Renamo's activities to Khmer Rouge atrocities in Kampuchea.

Portuguese police are also investigating the possibility that alleged shady financial dealing by Fernandes led to his murder by those who feared his knowledge of such deals. The Washington leaders had accused Fernandes of embezzling \$1-million destined for arms purchases.

The police source stressed the faction fighting theory is only one of a number of possible explanations for Fernandes' murder.

But Ivete Fernandes, widow of the Renamo leader, alleged during a WM interview that the Washington faction of Renamo collaborated with Mozambique's secret service.

"SNASP [People's National Security Service] (Frelimo's secret service) killed my husband," she said during the interview, held in her small flat in a working class district of Lisbon. "The so-called Washington faction is not part of Renamo. Serapiao and Nota are only interested in Schaaf because he is paying for their good life in the States...Schaaf is working in conjunction with SNASP to undermine the organisation."

Another aspect of Fernandes' theory is that Paulo Oliveira, a leading Renamo figure who defected to Maputo after losing a leadership battle within the Lisbon faction last year, provided SNASP with the information to carry out their assassination plot.

"I accuse Oliveira of being morally responsible for the murder of my husband...I have no doubt whatsoever that he gave SNASP the information necessary for the operation in which my husband was kidnapped and eventually murdered."

Fernandes has no evidence to back her claims and it is extremely unlikely the Heritage Foundation, which has consistently opposed Frelimo's Marxist policies, would co-operate with SNASP.

But her views are significant because they indicate how bitter the infighting within Renamo has become before her husband's death.

Ironically Fernandes' claims of a deep split between the Washington faction and the Lisbon-based leadership of Renamo coincides with claims made by Oliveira soon after he accepted Frelimo's amnesty offer and defected to Mozambique.

In a press conference in Maputo on March 14, Oliveira told reporters Renamo was characterised by contradictions and conflicting directions, with each faction based in a different capital, under the influence of political figures in the host country.

The major split, he said, was between the Washington-Paris axis of Renamo and the Lisbon leadership, which has close ties to supporters in Bonn and enjoys the support of Dhlakama.

Oliviera said Fernandes, leader of the Lisbon-Bonn-Mozambique axis, was also backed by elements in the South African Defence Force, who allegedly shaped and supported Renamo's policy of destabilisation through terror.

The South African Government has consistently denied allegations that it is continuing to support Renamo in defiance of the 1984 Nkomati Accord with Mozambique.

Oliviera also claimed the Washington faction had attempted on a number of occasions to oust the Lisbon group in a bid to clean up Renamo's image and present the movement as a bona fide group of anti-communist freedom fighters.

Portuguese police are not only concentrating on the faction fighting theory about Fernandes' murder. The source said they were also considering the following hypotheses: Frelimo's secret police planned and carried out the assassination.

Elements in the Portuguese Army and secret service did not favour the prospect of a rapprochement between Portugal and Frelimo and staged the murder in the hope of implicating SNASP and sabotaging improved relations between the two countries. After the murder relations between the two countries did indeed deteriorate and Portugal's prime minister, Cavaco Silva cancelled a planned visit to Maputo.

The aspect of the case not in dispute is the identity of the last person seen in public with Fernandes: Alexandre Chagas, a Portuguese citizen who arrived in Lisbon on March 1 with some R60,000 in South African bank notes.

Chagas left Portugal for Casablanca the next day and police believe he handed Fernandes over to the eventual assassins. Until Chagas is deported from Morocco little more can be ascertained.

But what emerges from the murder, and recent events in rebel-controlled territory within Mozambique, is that Renamo is experiencing a grave crisis as its warring factions threaten to tear the organization apart.