

# Top MNR rebel shot dead in city

## Military Correspondent

**MYSTERY** surrounds the death of a senior member of the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR), Mr Orlando Cristina, who was shot dead in Pretoria this week.

The head of the media liaison section of the South African Police in Pretoria, Lieutenant-Colonel Chris Coetzee, today confirmed an investigation had been launched into a shooting incident in which Mr Cristina, a white man, was killed in Pretoria this week.

No arrests had been made yet, he said.

No further details about the shooting were available, he said.

The Pretoria News Foreign Service reports that the Mozambique government was today making urgent inquiries about reports of the killing of the general secretary and second-in-command of the anti-Frelimo movement who had been shot dead in Pretoria.

## Successor

Initially Pretoria Murder and Robbery Squad Police claimed no knowledge of the death of Mr Cristina.

Sources in Johannesburg who have contact with the MNR say they are so certain he is dead they are already discussing a successor.

Mr Cristina was found dead in a Pretoria flat and friends say they do not know if it was case of suicide, murder or accident.

The former big game hunter was one of Frelimo's most bitter opponents for more than 20 years.

He was one of the first agents of the former Portuguese secret police in Mozambique to infiltrate the movement in Dar es Salaam in 1964.

After the Lisbon coup he is believed to have fled to Rhodesia taking with him files belonging to right-wing millionaire Mr Jorge Jardim on the special paratroop force the GEPS.

He then worked with the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation in forming the MNR from mainly black members of the Portuguese special forces.

Mozambican officials claim that after Zimbabwean independence he crossed into South Africa with a group of his guerrillas.

Mr Christina was long considered the "father" of the MNR.

Though his lack of personal resources prevented him becoming nominal leader of the movement he was believed to have become the driving force behind it after the death of its military commander, Andre Matsangaiza, during Frelimo offensive in November 1979.

Mr Christina's death is a major blow to the MNR which has military reserves in Mozambique.

President Machel has persistently claimed the anti-Frelimo MNR is South African-backed.

In recent months Frelimo have stepped up their campaign against the guerrillas who operate mainly in the country's Gaza province.