

Maputo rebel chief's death mystery

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By CHRIS STEYN

THE "White father" of the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MNR) and sworn enemy of Mozambique President Samora Machel, was found shot dead near Pretoria this week.

Mr Orlando Christina, general secretary and second-in-command of the anti-Frelimo government, was found dead in bed on his farm near Pretoria with a bullet wound in the neck. Frelimo is Pres

Machel's ruling party in Mozambique.

Lieutenant-Colonel Chris Coerzee, head of the media liaison section of the South African Police, confirmed yesterday that an investigation had been launched into

Mr Christina's death on Sunday night.

He said in a statement in Pretoria that no arrests had been made and no further details of the shooting were available.

The Mozambique Government is reported to

have made urgent inquiries about a report that Mr Christina had been shot.

Sources in Johannesburg who have contact with the MNR, said the movement was already

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discussing a successor.

Mr Christina is said to have been one of Frelimo's most bitter opponents for more than 20 years.

Agent

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

He is believed to have fled to Rhodesia after the Lisbon coup where he allegedly worked with the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation in forming the MNR from mainly Black members of

Portuguese special forces.

After Rhodesian independence he crossed the border with a group of his guerrillas, and settled on a farm outside Pretoria.

President

Mr Cristina was tipped as a future President of Mozambique if the MNR ever came to power in the former Portuguese colony. He had spearheaded most of the organisation's resistance against the Frelimo Government from his farm.

Sources close to the MNR, who described Mr Cristina's death as a "terrible blow to the liberation struggle" in Mozambique, said he often used his home as a headquarters for other MNR exiles in the country, of whom there were reported to be many.

He evidently also offered countless Mozambican dissidents refuge on the farm, which was said to be well-guarded.

Sapa reports that police were unable to cast any light on the mysterious death which, sources say, could prove problematic to the MNR leadership because, it is believed, there are few men in the movement's hierarchy suited to fill Mr Cristina's post.

The name of the movement's foreign relations secretary, Mr Famel Maluza (61), has been mentioned as being high up in the successor stakes. The organisation's public relations secretary, Mr Evo Fernandez, at present based in Lisbon, is considered another possible candidate.