

## **Assassination**

Orlando Cristina, big game hunter, secret police agent, assassin, and secretary general of the "Mozambique National Resistance," died as violently as he had lived. In the small hours of April 19, an unidentified assailant put a bullet through his head.

According to the MNR radio station *Voz da Africa Livre* (Voice of Free Africa), broadcasting from the Transvaal, Cristina was wounded in battle inside Mozambique and died while being taken out of the country. Unfortunately for the MNR, this fairy tale was contradicted by Cristina's wife. She told the Press that she and her husband had been asleep at their farm near Pretoria when a gunman came to the window and shot Cristina. For the first time it was public knowledge that the MNR leader not only lived in South Africa, but owned property there. This is, of course, highly embarrassing for the South Africans who have always denied that the MNR operates from their territory. The circumstances of Cristina's death add yet another piece of evidence for Mozambique's case that the MNR is nothing but an irregular unit of the South African armed forces.

Who killed Cristina? The most likely explanation is that he fell victim to one of the MNR's periodic internal feuds. The movement has always been riven with petty jealousies and personal intrigues. Major power struggles have occurred in the past, most notably after the death of the MNR's first commander-in-chief, André Matsangaissa in November 1979. Cristina played a key role in ensuring that Afonso Dhlakama succeeded Matsangaissa, using ruthless methods, including assassination attempts, against those who got in his way. Thus Cristina certainly made enemies within the MNR; they may have been waiting for a chance to exact their revenge.

The loss of their secretary-general adds to the MNR's problems. It has recently suffered a series of defeats in southern Mozambique.