

Diaries show all not well in MNR

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MAPUTO.

DOCUMENTS captured from MNR bandits when their Gorongosa headquarters was overrun by Mozambican and Zimbabwean forces show considerable tension among MNR leaders, particularly between bandit commanders in the field.

In June 1985 bandit chief Afonso Dhlakama complained to Colonel Charles van Niekerk of South African military intelligence that he was "an unknown president".

"In the outside world they speak more about Evo and Correia than about the leader himself," he lamented.

"Evo" is Evo Fernandes, a former agent of the Portuguese Secret Police, the Pide/DGS, and now the MNR secretary-general, a post to which he was appointed not by any MNR meeting, but directly by Colonel van

Niekerk and his superiors in military intelligence.

"Correia" is Jorge Correia, the MNR's garrulous representative in Western Europe. Both men are Portuguese citizens.

At the time of Dhlakama's complaint, he and Van Niekerk were planning the first clandestine visit of the then South African Deputy Foreign Minister Louis Nel to Gorongosa, located in the central Mozambican province of Sofala. Dhlakama insisted that Fernandes should not accompany Nel.

"I tell you," said Dhlakama. "that the presence of Evo Fernandes would be highly prejudicial with Nel here. That's because Nel and Frelimo, and even you, our military friends, think that it is Fernandes who tells the president everything, or that the president of Renamo only says what Evo wants.

"You have never imagined that the president of Renamo might be a man capable of taking decisions in these political matters," he complained. "The visit of Nel was therefore very important for Renamo, and for me in particular."

When the MNR was running out of ammunition in mid-1984, its Lisbon spokesmen simply did not know what the true situation was. In a long message to Van Niekerk on June 16 1984 Dhlakama warned that unless the MNR was resupplied, it could suffer "situation identical to that of 1980, when we suffered greatly when Rhodesia abandoned us".

He added. "Our secretary-general, like our other politicians, doesn't know about this bad situation which might

happen to us, because they only follow our victories, and not the opportunities which Machel has for wiping us out".

On October 10 1984 a further problem arose when Fernandes demanded to be received with military honours and Dhlakama refused. The MNR's diarist noted "that the general says he has a right to military honours because he is number two in the organisation and represents the movement as a whole".

It was pointed out to Fernandes that his predecessor Orlando Christina killed at the MNR's main base in South Africa in 1983 had not demanded military honours. Fernandes brushed the example of Christina aside with: "I can't be a slave of the past. If the former secretary-general wasn't given military honours, that's because he lived on a farm. Things are very different with me." — Ziana-AIM.