

Renamo Faces Crisis From 'Warring Factions'
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[By Paul Musker]

[Text] Renamo appears to be facing a crisis following shoot-outs between rival bands of rebels inside Mozambique and the eruption of internecine fights within the organisation's external wing.

According to a Portuguese newspaper, AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL, at least 12 deaths have been reported recently in Mozambique's Zambezia Province as a result of armed battles between rebel groups inside the country.

(Renamo commander Gimo M'Piri is reported to have established a new autonomous force (Unamo) [Mozambican National Union] opposed to domination of the rebel movement by Afonso Dhlakama's Ndau tribe. The Ndau, a Shona-speaking grouping, occupy almost 70 percent of the chief positions in the movement but constitute only two percent of the population of Mozambique.

The organisation has also lost international credibility in the wake of the report, published recently by the U.S. State Department, which holds Renamo responsible for the murder of more than 100,000 civilians in the last two years.

Meanwhile Renamo's external wing has been left without an effective head after the murder of its leader, Evo Fernandes, near Lisbon in April this year.

Renamo's operations are surrounded by a web of secrecy and intrigue that makes it difficult for observers to identify the groups and issues responsible for the infighting.

But the WEEKLY MAIL [WM] has been able to piece together a profile of the movement and its multiple factions after conducting a series of interviews in Lisbon around the issue of Fernandes' murder.

A high-level source in the Direccao Geral de Combate ao Banditismo [General Directorate for Combat Against Banditry], the Portuguese police department investigating Fernandes' murder, told the WM they are considering the possibility that faction fighting in Renamo led to his murder.

According to this hypothesis the American office of Renamo, which has been keen to rid the movement of its terrorist image in a bid to obtain official U.S. support for the organisation, disapproved of Fernandes' close links with Dhlakama, the Renamo military chief responsible for the campaign of terror inside Mozambique.