

Another MNR Spokesman Turns Himself In

Chanjunja Chivaca Joao, 25, the MNR's head of organisation and mobilisation for Europe in Lisbon, has turned himself over to the Mozambican authorities.

At a press conference on 30 November, Mr Joao said he was about to be appointed the bandit's chief information officer when he decided to return to Mozambique and accept the offer of amnesty to all bandits, inside or outside the country. He is the second official from the MNR's Lisbon offices to abandon the group and accept the amnesty. In March, Paulo Oliveira, a Portuguese citizen who was MNR spokesperson for western Europe until 1987, gave himself up to Mozambican authorities.

Bandits see Songo meeting as "a stab in the back"

According to Mr Joao the leadership of the MNR bandits reacted to the September meeting between the Mozambican and South African presidents, Joaquim Chissano and P.W. Botha, by trying to strengthen its ties with South African military intelligence.

Communications equipment—including a fax machine set up by military intelligence officer Brigadier Charles Van Niekerk in Lisbon in February to improve contacts between the MNR office in Portugal and the bandits' rear base in the Transvaal—is still in operation, he said.

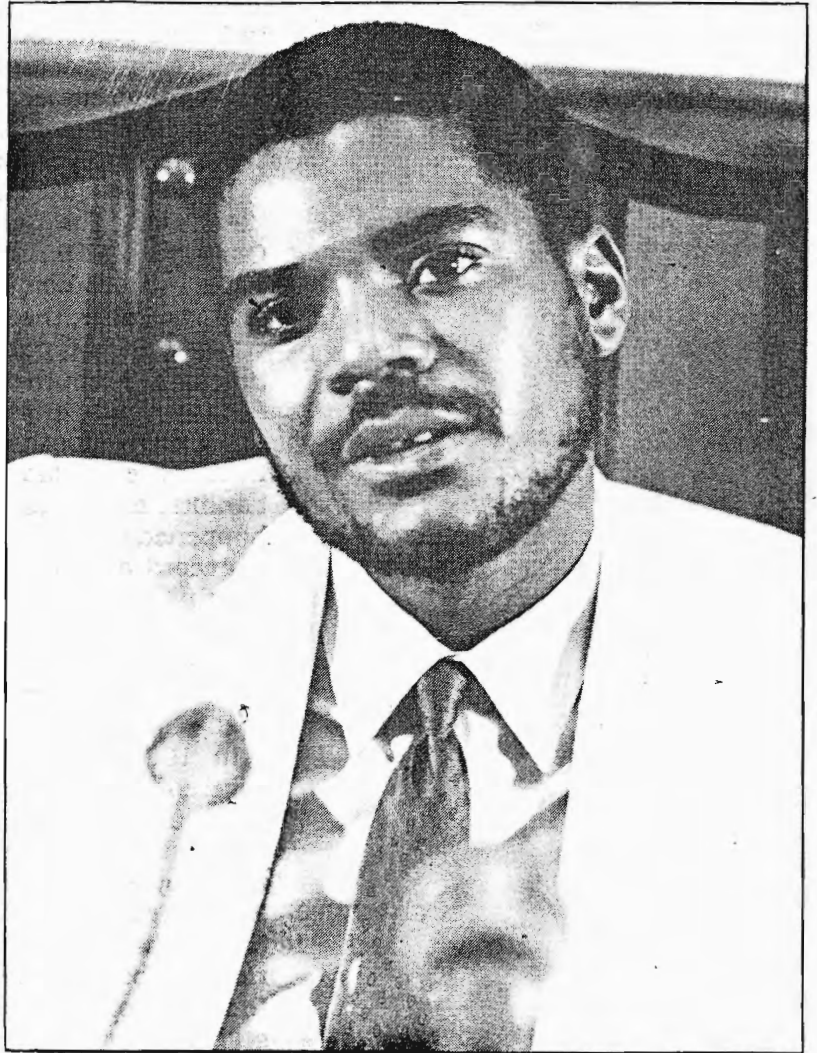
The equipment is now in the home of one of the MNR's top leaders in Lisbon, Portuguese citizen Ascensio Gomes Freitas.

But the September meeting between Mr Chissano and P.W. Botha, held in the northern Mozambican town of Songo, took the MNR by surprise, and they considered it "a stab in the back".

"We did not think the South Africans would sit at the negotiating table again, and in Mozambican territory, and discuss a peaceful solution," he said.

The MNR's response, he said, was "to work to increase links with the South African military secret services, and to condemn the attitude taken by the South African government".

Mr Joao also said that the MNR receives a degree



Joao at Maputo press conference (AIM/Alfredo Mueche)

of support from the Kenyan secret services, and maintains an office in Nairobi.

Mr Joao worked for the Mozambican security services, SNASP, but he abandoned Mozambique in 1983, at the age of 19. "I was politically immature," he told the press conference.

In Lisbon, he made contact with the then general secretary of the MNR, Evo Fernandes, who was, like Mr Joao, a native of the central Mozambican city of Beira. It was Fernandes who drew Mr Joao into working for the MNR.

His initial tasks consisted of mobilising support for the MNR among the substantial Mozambican community in Lisbon, and eventually he rose to become a department head in the Lisbon office.

Asked what he would do now, Mr Joao said, "I hope to be reintegrated into society, find a job, and work." He said he would be prepared to work in agriculture.

He asked the journalists to inform Mozambicans

still deceived by the MNR that the amnesty was perfectly genuine. "My case should be an example for others," he said.

Mr Joao said that while the Bonn government did not support the MNR, its secret services, the BND, did, through personal links established with the MNR's foreign affairs secretary, Artur Janeiro da Fonseca, who lives in Germany.

West German Secret Service provides money and security

The West German Secret Services, said Mr Joao, provided the MNR with money, and also personal security for Fonseca.

Asked about MNR links with the West German ship the *Edda*, currently detained in the central Mozambican port of Quelimane, Mr Joao said he did not think that the boat had been running guns to the bandits. (See "German Ship Held in Quelimane", p. 6.) Rather he saw the incident in which the captain and three of the *Edda*'s crew members were allegedly held captive by the MNR as an attempt by the bandits to blackmail the West German government.

MNR chief Afonso Dhlakama wished to visit West Germany, said Mr Joao, and so the sailors were supposedly kidnapped in order to persuade the West German authorities to allow him in.

The *Edda*'s captain claims to have been taken prisoner on 20 August. In October, according to Mr Joao, Dhlakama was in the West German town of Heidelberg to chair a meeting of the MNR leadership.

He reached West Germany via South Africa, and Mr Joao also confirmed the story from the *Edda*'s captain that he had been flown from a bandit base in southern Mozambique by plane to Johannesburg at nighttime.

The Heidelberg meeting decided that Dhlakama "must change his image from that of a bandit to that of a political leader", said Mr Joao. The MNR needed to cultivate a diplomatic image "in order to compete with Frelimo".

MNR to place bandit forces inside Zimbabwe

The Heidelberg meeting also adopted a change in military strategy. Mr Joao said the MNR would now attempt a significant concentration of forces inside Zimbabwe, in order to force the Zimbabwean authorities to move their troops away from the strategic transport routes inside Mozambique that they are helping to defend.

The bandits' leadership blamed the presence of the Zimbabwean army for their military failures inside Mozambique.

The death of MNR bandit leader Evo Fernandes last April was the result of conflicts inside the MNR, Mr Joao told the press conference. Evo Fernandes' body was found by a roadside near Lisbon on 21

April. At the time of his death he was head of an MNR research department.

"Evo Fernandes never wanted to work in a team," recalled Mr Joao. "He worked alone with his wife. All the information he had he kept for himself. He created divisions."

Conflict within MNR cause of murders and bandit splits

The MNR in Portugal split into two groups, he said, because Evo Fernandes "did not accept that people such as Manuel Frank (the current MNR representative in Lisbon) or myself should be in positions of authority".

After Fernandes' death, his widow, Ivete, accused Mr Joao, Manuel Frank, and other MNR Lisbon figures of being "the people who led Evo to his death".

Mr Joao said that Ivete Fernandes was now running what was effectively a second MNR office out of her home in the town of Cascais. "The Cascais component consists of people who've been outside Mozambique for a long time, and disagree with the current MNR leadership," he said.

After the US State Department published the report on MNR atrocities by refugee expert Robert Gersony earlier this year, the MNR lost a great deal of credibility, said Mr Joao. Its sympathisers in Lisbon now "by and large are not Mozambicans, but Portuguese who used to have interests in Mozambique".

Divisions inside the MNR were also responsible for the 1987 deaths of MNR leaders Joao Ataide and Mateus Lopes in a mysterious car crash in Malawi. "Ataide was killed because of internal conflicts," said Mr Joao.

He said that MNR commander Afonso Dhlakama had just appointed Ataide general secretary, a post left vacant after Evo Fernandes had been removed from it in 1980. But Ataide died while returning from the meeting inside Mozambique where this decision was taken. "The information that reached us in Lisbon was that part of the MNR was not in agreement with appointing Ataide," said Mr Joao.

He also spoke of the formation of a separate bandit group, Unamo (Mozambique National Union), which is fighting both against the Mozambican people and against the MNR. This group was founded by Gimo Phiri, formerly the number two to Dhlakama in the MNR military hierarchy, and by an Asian trader living in Malawi, Gilberto Magid.

Magid holds three passports—British, Portuguese and Malawian—claimed Mr Joao. Gimo Phiri stays in Magid's house when he visits Malawi.

The split has tribal origins. Phiri and his supporters formed Unamo because they objected to the domination of the MNR by people from Sofala province who spoke the Ndau language. Phiri took the MNR structure in Zambezia province with him, Joao said, and currently much of the banditry in upper Zambezia is the work of Unamo.