

MNR chief ^{CT.} to live _{9/7/83} in SA

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Own Correspondent

LISBON. — The new high officer of the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR) said in Lisbon this week that he had recently had talks in South Africa with military intelligence chiefs, including a Brigadier Johannes Botha, on the role of the guerilla force.

Mr Evo Fernandes, until recently the movement's Lisbon-based European spokesman, said he had been chosen to replace Mr Orlando Christina, who was chief officer of the MNR until he was assassinated near Pretoria in April.

He added that he would be taking up his post near Pretoria early next month. Mr Fernandes is a Portuguese citizen, trained as a lawyer in Mozambique.

Until about nine months ago, both the MNR and the South African Government strenuously denied any links between them, but there has been a marked change since then and neither side does much to hide its affiliations any longer.

The guerillas, who have been waging a five-year bush war against Samora Machel's marxist regime, also claim to receive strong backing from sources in West Germany and France.

Resistance sources in Lisbon said there had been a major organizational shake-up in the MNR after the Pretoria assassination.

Political wing

Mr Fernandes, who earlier claimed the killing of Mr Cristina had been carried out by the Maputo government, said he had since tightened up the organization's operations in South Africa.

The MNR believes its next phase will be to implant an alternative political organization inside Mozambique ready to take over when the military fight is over.

● A Defence Force spokesman said in Pretoria yesterday that he had no comment to make on "such obvious speculative reporting and assumptions".