



International Freedom Foundation

May 31, 1988

Mr. Reed Kramer
Africa News
Box 3851
Durham, NC 27702

Dear Mr. Kramer:

Enclosed please find an article by Prof. André Thomashausen on the death of RENAMO official Evo Fernandes. Prof. Thomashausen has asked us to determine whether this article is suitable for publication in the United States.

If you are interested in using this piece, or if you would like more information, please give me a call.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey L. Pandin
Communications Director

TO EVERY THING THERE IS A SEASON . . . :
REMEMBERING MY FRIEND EVO CAMOES FERNANDES

by

Professor André Thomashausen, UNISA

*To every thing there is a season, and a time
to every purpose under heaven:
a time to kill and a time to give life;
a time to break down and a time to build up;
a time to love and a time to hate;
a time of war and a time of peace.
(Ecclesiastes, 3:1,3,8)*

These slightly modified verses from the Ecclesiastes were the message of Evo Camoes Fernandes to his fellow country men, printed in A LUTA CONTINUA of July 1985, the mouthpiece of the Mozambique Resistance Movement (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana - RENAMO). Evo Fernandes was then still the Secretary-General of Renamo.

On April 21st 1988, a telephone call informed me that Evo's dead body had been found at the bottom of a wind-mill in Malveira da Serra, a small village in the mountains stretching some 30 km to the North of Lisbon, the capital city of Portugal. I remembered the verses from A LUTA CONTINUA. Evo had quoted them to me more for the first time in 1965, when he, as a law student in Lisbon, had been the leader of a group of 14 year old boy scouts to which I belonged. I remembered his provocative smile and self-confidence in the early eighties, when he acted as Renamo's foreign representative and spokesman. I also saw again his strained and tired face during the evenings of October 1984, when he took part in the tripartite negotiations between Frelimo, Renamo and the South African government in Pretoria.

Kidnapped and Tortured

During the days following the death of Evo Fernandes, the pieces of a gruesome puzzle emerged. On the evening of April 17th, he had accepted to meet at least two envoys of the Frelimo government in a restaurant in Cascais.

XAVIER CHAGAS, a white Portuguese living in Maputo, Mozambique, and travelling frequently on behalf of a business front organisation of the Mozambique Intelligence Service, SNASP. He would have been acting on instructions of one JOAO CARLOS ESTEIRA, Director of the Department D-13 (Control of External Activities of RENAMO), of SNASP, and of General BONIFACIO GRUVETA, chairman of the Frelimo Veteran Soldiers' Association and one of the most influential of Frelimo's "old guard".

According to *Africa Confidencial*, a Lisbon publication, ESTEIRA was spotted in Lisbon some 10 days before 17 April, and again in Paris in the week following that date.

GRUVETA had been pointed out in January 1987 as one of the authors of a letter circulated in Maputo, in the name of Frelimo's veteran soldiers, calling upon President Chissano to enter into peace talks with Renamo, for the establishment of a Government of National Unity. Much to the surprise of many observers, Gruveta was never disciplined, and emerged rather strengthened than weekend from the reshuffle of Frelimo's military command structures later in June 1987.

Fernandes left the restaurant on 17 April at 11 pm, in the company of four men, in a motor car driven by one JOAQUIM MACIAS, also a Portuguese resident in Maputo. It was the last time that he was seen alive. As confirmed by his widow, he was killed with five shots three days later, after he was brutally tortured. First news were that practically every bone in his body was fractured successively, while he was still alive. Subsequent autopsy reports have established that his body showed severe bruise marks, as resulting from electroshocks, and that he had also been administered Sodiumpentathol, know as a specialized "truth drug".

The Victim

Fernandes, born in Beira, Mozambique, in 1944 (partially of Indian descent), father of five children from two marriages and one legitimated daughter, went to school in Mozambique, studied law in Lisbon and began his career as an investigating officer in the Prosecution Department of the Ministry of Justice in Mozambique in 1968. Maliciously, Frelimo turned this

around and pretended that he worked as member of the Portuguese colonial secret police.

In 1969 he joined the daily newspaper *Noticias da Beira*. When Frelimo took over in Mozambique in 1974, he was a Director of the paper. He left Mozambique to work as an executive of one of the biggest Portuguese book distributors and publishers in Lisbon.

As an educated man who spoke four languages fluently, he soon gained influence in exiled Mozambique opposition circles. In 1984 he became Secretary General of RENAMO. When RENAMO abolished the post of Secretary General in 1986, Fernandes' new task was to head a new Research Department of RENAMO.

What Motives ?

In April 1987 Fernandes was requested by RENAMO's president Afonso Dhlakama to try and prepare international contacts leading to peace talks with Frelimo, pursuant to Renamo's announcement that they would be willing to enter into such negotiations.

As reported mainly by the Portuguese media, in particular *Africa Confidential* and *Africa Post*, but also by the English *Africa Confidential*, a series of visits and contacts by Fernandes followed, concentrating on France, Spain, West Germany, the USA and finally, early in 1988, also South Africa.

In an interview which appeared in the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* of 7 February 1988, President Dhlakama repeated his offer to negotiate with Frelimo without any pre-conditions. In early March, Frelimo's *Politburo* apparently decided to carefully explore the possibilities for such negotiations. On the other hand, South Africa and Portugal were keen to mediate some kind of understanding between Renamo and Frelimo, as a necessary condition for the envisaged re-habilitation the Cahora Bassa project.

Likewise, the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva was seeking an agreement with Renamo, in order to resume its emergency relief flights in Mozambique. The Red Cross flights had been suspended on 22 December 1987, on account of Frelimo's inability to provide security. Incidentally, such

an agreement was finalized during the last week of April 1988, and regular Red Cross relief flights both to Renamo controlled areas and to the refugee camps controlled by Frelimo have since been carried out.

Africa Post from Lisbon reported that as a result of Fernandes' secret diplomacy, and with the assistance of an East African country, high level talks with President Dhlakama in the USA, in Europe and possibly later also in South Africa were planned and supposed to have been initiated at the end of April.

Renamo or Frelimo?

Under these circumstances, only two possible explanations for the assassination of Fernandes exist. He was either eliminated by a faction within Renamo opposed to peace talks, or by Frelimo's intelligence service SNASP. A third alternative offered by *The Herald* in Zimbabwe blames South Africa for the assassination. According to *The Herald*, South Africa would have wished to rid itself from an alleged "hard-liner" in the leadership of Renamo. This alternative, however, is highly improbable. Fernandes' efforts were clearly aimed at making a settlement in Mozambique possible, the principle beneficiary of which would have been South Africa.

The theory of a bloody faction fight within Renamo is also not convincing. The fact that Fernandes was tortured speaks against it. More importantly, however, Renamo's handful of external representatives would never have possessed the means and the sophistication to execute this type of crime. There is also much less division amongst Renamo external supporters than what some would like to make believe. So far, none of these supporters has ever challenged Renamo's President Dhlakama; and those who have cut their ties with the movement, have lost all influence in Mozambique opposition politics. Lastly, CHAGAS, the key figure with whom Fernandes dined on 17 April, had on his arrival from Maputo presented credentials legitimizing him as a mediator for Frelimo, and had never been involved in any Renamo activities whatsoever.

The involvement of Frelimo's SNASP, on the other hand, appears highly probable. The people in whose car Fernandes drove to torture and death were shady go-betweens acting on Maputo's instructions. Final proof will emerge

from the forthcoming trial in Lisbon, against CHAGAS and MACIAS, who were arrested in Morocco on 29 April, on their way to Maputo. Both have already been extradited to Portugal, as well as a third person who was apparently involved in setting up the fatal diner on 17 April: MANUEL PINTO DA COSTA, who was arrested in Paris on 30 April.

Fernandes' efforts were about to give Renamo's leaders international exposure for the first time, with Black African assistance. Renamo's accession to international negotiating tables would have threatened Frelimo's position considerably. Moreover, international negotiations with Renamo going beyond the question of Cahora Bassa could have caused Frelimo to lose its 13 year monopoly of political power. An eventually resulting participation of Renamo in the Mozambique government would have introduced fundamental changes in the governmental system of Mozambique.

In this context, it is also interesting that Frelimo, or a section of FRELIMO, has at least once before tried to jeopardize negotiations by a similar international kidnapping action. On 25 August 1984, while preparations for the Pretoria talks between Renamo and Frelimo were well under way, Frelimo's SNASP kidnapped four Portuguese members of a hunting safari in Tanzania. Frelimo was then convinced that at least two of them were important supporters of Renamo, due to their family ties with Mozambique opposition circles. The four, Adelino Serras Pires, Adelino Serras Pires Jnr, Carlos Artur Serras Pires Cardina and Rui Monteiro were taken by force from Tanzania and spent 4 months in various Mozambique prisons, having been tortured repeatedly. They were only released after several European heads of state had intervened, an assistance owed to the fact that the former French President Giscard d'Estaing had been a member of the hunting safari in question.

What Next?

The next rounds of talks on the rehabilitation of Cahora Bassa were already scheduled when Fernandes was kidnapped. During the last week of April, high-level talks between South Africa and Maputo took place. At the same time, Anglo American chairman Mr Gavin Relly visited Maputo, as did the chairman of Lonhro, Mozambique's biggest foreign investor. In the words of Evo Fernandes, quoted at the outset, "this is a time for peace".

In a recent message to the international media, President Dhlakama condemned the assassination of Fernandes, but reiterated at the same time Renamo's continuing preparedness to enter into peace negotiations.

Frelimo's propaganda on an alleged support of Renamo by South Africa has failed. Frelimo's biggest coup in this regard, the defection of a Renamo spokesman to Maputo in mid March 1988, has revealed nothing sensational. The only factual accusation of the defector relating to recent years was that South Africa had assisted Fernandes in obtaining a telefax copier for his office in Portugal during 1987. As one diplomat in Maputo noted : Frelimo must be pretty shaky, if one telefax machine can pose such threat to its rule....

Frelimo knows that the war can only be ended through negotiations. Frelimo's amnesty for the rebels, in effect for 10 months now, has not weakened Renamo. Less than 1000 Renamo followers turned themselves in, of an admitted total number of 20.000 fighters. Not even the recent report on alleged atrocities committed by Renamo, commissioned by the US State Department, can distract from the fact that Renamo's guerrilla war presupposes the very popular support that Frelimo has evidently lost.

The assassination of Fernandes can only be explained as one last and desperate effort of a minority of fanatical marxists in Frelimo's ranks to prevent what Frelimo will ultimately have to accept : national reconciliation.

The immediate risk

The immediate risk for South Africa must be seen in a possible failure to bring about a viable Cahora Bassa agreement. The anti-South African activists are actually hoping for a Cahora Bassa agreement in terms of which South Africa would assure the security of the power lines, without Renamo and Frelimo having first committed each other to the security of the power lines. If the reconstruction of the power lines by American and West European technicians is then sabotaged anew, it will be easy to blame South Africa's former and alleged involvement with Renamo. South Africa would stand accused as an unreliable and double crossing partner. This might become the decisive propagandistic move to force the European governments to agree to the