

Maputo 'gave order to kill Renamo man'

Jim Jolliffe in Lisbon

A MAN charged with complicity in the assassination of the leader of the Renamo Mozambican rebels in Lisbon last year has reportedly confessed to the crime, and said he was working for the Mozambique secret service, SNASP.

Mr Evo Fernandes was kidnapped and murdered in April 1988 after he met Alexandre Chagas, a Portuguese citizen who said he had been commissioned by the Mozambique Government to initiate peace negotiations with Renamo, which since independence in 1975 has wreaked havoc.

Chagas was arrested in Morocco days after Fernandes' bullet-riddled body was found by a roadside outside Lisbon.

He was extradited to Portugal in October and has been held by police in legal procedures shrouded in secrecy. A trial is not expected for some months.

But a front-page story in the leading weekly, *Expresso*, citing sources close to the investigation, said Chagas had confessed to shooting Fernandes.

The story said SNASP had given him a "free hand" in the killing, with back-up support from the embassies in Lisbon and Paris. Mozambican officials have denied all involvement; a Renamo defector claimed recently in the capital, Maputo, that Fernandes was murdered by rivals within his own organisation.

But Mr Fernandes' widow said he had been killed by a trained military person, which Chagas was not, and the confession was to protect the real killer.