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## British Embassy 'link' man a saboteur in Mozambique

THE BRITISH Connection with the South African-backed Mozambique National Resistance is now emerging more strongly – and in a way that implicates the British Embassy in Maputo. Links between Britain and the irregular MNR armed bands, responsible for many deaths and acts of economic disruption in Mozambique, are alarming members of the British community there.

Last month, the *Observer* identified Alan Gingles, a former British Army lieutenant, as one of the MNR saboteurs killed while laying explosives on the Mozambique/Zimbabwe rail line in 1981. On 17 February this year, British-born Finlay Dion Hamilton was convicted for his involvement with sabotage and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Despite his British passport, Hamilton was raised and educated in South Africa. In the early 1960s he went to work for the South African company Manica Freight

Services, based in Beira, Mozambique's second city. At the time of his arrest in December, Hamilton was managing director of Manica Freight and, among other things, head of the Beira Aero Club. In his private plane he paid regular visits to South Africa, both on business and to see his family. He is also known to be a close friend of Evo Fernandes, the MNR representative in Lisbon. He visited Fernandes earlier last year and is godfather to one of his children.

He was used by the British Embassy in Maputo as a kind of unofficial British consul in Beira. Last year, British Ambassador John Stewart invited British residents in Beira to meet Hamilton, and presented him as the liaison man through whom communications with the Embassy should be channelled in case of need.

In January this year a number of Britons working on contract in Mozambique and resident in Beira wrote an angry note to Stewart,

protesting that the Embassy actions could have compromised them. Hamilton had also, said the note, acted for the Embassy over accommodation, transport and contact with local officials. And plans had been announced for a radio link via Hamilton from Beira to the Embassy in Maputo.

It has been established that Hamilton was in contact with, if not the controller of, the MNR network based in Beira. His arrest came two days after the spectacular blowing up of the BP-owned fuel storage tanks on 9 December. On 24 January, the local newspapers carried photos of the arms, ammunition and radio equipment found during a search of Hamilton's home. In his hangar at Beira airport, 1000 litres of aero fuel were also found concealed.

The Foreign Office refuses to comment on any links Hamilton had with either the British Embassy or the MNR, but says merely 'Hamilton was a well-known British businessman in Beira'. The consul is keeping in close contact with Hamilton, having last visited him in jail on 24 February.

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