

The Tomb v. 4

MOZAMBIQUE no. 47, 23/11/79

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Owners of charter aircraft nationalised without compensation by the Mozambique Marxist regime had been singularly lucky. Most of them managed to elude Frelimo's surveillance and fly their planes to unknown destinations.

Not so lucky was leading charter operator Rolando Mendes who recently staged a daring escape operation taking out of the country three light planes — two Aero-Commanders and a Beechcraft. Things went wrong when two of the aircraft were brought to South Africa for urgent repairs and maintenance.

Keen Frelimo informers in the Republic reported back to Maputo that the planes were in Pretoria and shortly afterwards a team of top officials of the Mozambique secret police SNASP arrived in the capital to recover the planes.

So did Mendes. But, unable to convince the courts that he was the rightful owner of the aircraft, he was promptly arrested and charged with theft. If he is found guilty, Frelimo will go to any lengths to secure his extradition.