

Frelimo pilot defects

Sowetan
9/7/81

A BLACK Mozambiquan made a daring escape in a Mig 17 aircraft in a bid to defect from Mozambique and was forced down by two South African Airforce (SAAF) Mirages over the Eastern Transvaal.

The two SAAF pilots faced the dilemma of shooting down the Mig 17, or escorting it to safety.

They had no radio contact with the aircraft after intercepting it, but decided to escort it to Hoedspruit when the pilot showed no aggressive

intentions.

The pilot defected because of his dissatisfaction with Frelimo Government policy in Mozambique, he said.

Military correspondents were flown to the airbase to view the aircraft and meet the pilot, Captain Adriano Francisco Bomba.

Captain Bomba landed at about 10.29 am yesterday after being intercepted by pilots, Major Frans Pretorius and Captain Hennie Louw.

Well-built and wearing camouflage uniform Captain Bomba spoke to newsmen in good English with a slight American accent.

"I was received very well here and now you must excuse me because I am tired and must get some rest," he said.

Brigadier Dries van der Lith, Chief of Air Staff Intelligence said the Mig 17 dated from just after the Korean war, equipped with a 39-mm cannon and two 23-mm cannons. - Supp.