Frelimo pilot defects

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 Roedtspruit when the pilot showed no aggressive intentions.

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

Well-built and wearing camouflage uniform Captain Bomha 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 Stuff Intelligence said the Mig 17 dated from just after the Korean war, equipped with a 39-mm cannon and two 23-mm cannons. - Supa