

# Bomba copes with the Press barrage

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LIEUTENANT A F Bomba told Pressmen at the weekend he chose to defect to South Africa with one of the Mozambican Air Force's MiG-17 fighter jets simply because it was the most effective means of transport in the country.

This laconic-like reply characterised his answers throughout the Press conference at Hoedspruit in the Eastern Transvaal.

The Mozambican defector appeared unruffled by the barrage of questions he faced from foreign and local Press representatives.

Lt Bomba evidently enjoyed the attention which, he said, he knew his defection would generate. He spoke mostly in Portuguese.

He was not too alarmed when he saw the South African Air Force Mirages flying next to him after he had entered South African air space because, he said, he knew a Mirage a few kilometres behind him would be far more dangerous than one next to him.

Mozambique has 23 MiG-17 fighter planes, he said, and added: "The 24th one is here in South Africa." Mozambique also had three MiG-15 training aircraft. A fourth MiG-15 crashed, he said.

Lt Bomba said he had earned about R280 a month, but he hastened to add he did not defect because of his financial position — his reasons were "socio-political".

He did not know what to expect as a black living in South Africa — he had only the "anti-South African propaganda" to which he had been exposed in Mozambique to go by.

His mother was born in South Africa, but she left the country 25 years ago and could only have a "stale" impression of life in South Africa.

Bomba doubted whether his relatives in Mozambique would be harmed because of his defection. "I took the decision on my own," he said.

He would like to further his studies in a scientific field in South Africa and he would only be prepared to fly for the Mozambican Air Force again after there had been a change of government in that country.

Asked whether he despised the Frelimo Government enough to take up arms against it, he would only say: "The

fact that I defected proves that I have something against the government."

He said there was widespread dissatisfaction among Mozambicans, but added that the dissidents lacked leadership.

He could not be that leader because the authorities were watching his movements too closely.

Lt Bomba said he hoped his defection would inspire people of like mind who were still in Mozambique to do the same.

He also said:

- There was not enough food in Mozambique — the people's staple diet was President Machel's speeches;
- The Frelimo Government forced him to leave school in 1977 and join the air force;
- Russia's military role in Mozambique was limited to an advisory capacity;
- The Frelimo Government forced him to relinquish his Catholic religion but that he has since adopted it again;
- After the South African Defence Force's raid on Matola Mozambicans have been preparing a massive civilian defensive action — to avert similar attacks in the future;
- The average Mozambican did not view South Africa as a threat, and

● The Mozambican resistance movement had the strongest support in Beira.

Lt Bomba could not say why colleagues in Mozambique had dubbed him with the nickname "The Phenomenon".

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