

Plot to assassinate Machel was uncovered last year

MAPUTO.

A PLOT to assassinate President Samora Machel was uncovered in November 1985, according to the president himself in his last informal meeting with Mozambican journalists on 11 October.

On the 15th of this month, AIM published an article on the direct threats made by the South African Defence Minister, General Magnus Malan, against the Mozambican leader, and on the campaign waged against President Samora by much of the South African media.

The South African campaign, directly aimed against Cde Machel, had already lasted for several days, and the threatening declarations of the apartheid military hierarchy, had already led, to a climate of serious anxiety in Maputo. On October 11, several Mozambican journalists held an informal meeting with President Samora.

At the end of that afternoon, Carlos Cardoso, an AIM reporter and others went with the president to Lichinga House one of the official guest houses normally used to cater for visiting heads of states or other important foreign guests.

President Samora had been personally inspecting the guest houses.

Out on the veranda, looking over the spacious garden, "we sat around a table for a talk with the president that lasted until about nine o'clock that night."

"Samora wanted to speak to us, and to hear our opinions about the tense moments we are experiencing in the region, and particularly about South Africa and Malawi."

Talking generally about international problems, and particularly those of the Third World, Cde Machel referred to a biblical citation — the president would frequently refer to the bible though he was not a religious person. "As it says in the bible", he remarked, "to those who have nothing, the little that they have shall be taken from them and given to those that do have."

With the president as the sun set that afternoon, were three of his colleagues who also died in last Sunday's plane crash — Aquino de Braganca, the director of the Centre of African Studies at Maputo's Eduardo Mondlane University, the president's private secretary Muradali Mamadhussen, and his Press attaché Gulamo Khan, a former Radio Mozambique journalist.

After the first few minutes of discussion, Cde Machel asked the journalists present what they thought of the current situation.

"I had uppermost in my mind the whole adventurist behaviour of the South African military hierarchy over the years, and the recent threats of General Malan," said Carlos Cardoso. "Spoke of these things and told the president that the conclusion I drew was that they (the South African military chiefs) are going to try to kill you".

Cde Machel smiled, and scarcely had "I finished speaking then he replied 'they've already tried. In November 1985, they infiltrated bazookas into Mozambique that were to have been used to assassinate me'."

Cde Machel paused for a moment, then added: "I am in their way. I have not sold out to anyone. My hands are clean." — Zions