

# Cit. Mozambicans <sup>21/10</sup> <sub>36</sub> weep in the street

MAPUTO. — Mozambicans wept in the streets of Maputo yesterday and waited for official confirmation from their government that President Samora Machel, who had led the country since independence from Portugal, was killed in a plane crash on Sunday night.

President Machel's death, along with several senior members of the government, was announced by South Africa, on whose territory the Soviet-built plane crashed as it approached the Mozambican capital.

While surviving members of the country's Marxist leadership met for more than seven hours and Mozambican officials crossed the border to visit the crash site, government radio told this na-

tion of 13 million people only that President Machel was missing on a flight from Zambia.

Mr Machel's death strikes Mozambique at a time when his Marxist government has been reeling from setbacks in a prolonged war with Right-wing rebels and from economic reprisals by South Africa for its support for Black terrorists fighting Pretoria.

While the radio played sombre music, small groups of people gathered in the streets of the capital, waiting for news. Some wept openly. Most said they feared the worst.

Foreign Minister Mr Joaquim Chisaano, widely considered a successor to Mr Machel, returned to Maputo yesterday after

a trip to the United States.

He touched down on his way at the central port city of Beira at a time when Maputo airport was closed to all traffic for a few hours. In late afternoon, it was not clear whether the airport was open to normal traffic or only for official flights.

Under the Mozambican constitution, the central committee of the ruling party, Frelimo, will run the country until a successor to President Machel is appointed.

However veteran Black nationalist sources in SWA acquainted with the Mozambique political scene have tipped Parliamentary secretary, Mr Marcelino dos Santos, as the most likely candidate to succeed Pres Machel.

They described Mr Dos Santos, a Frelimo Politburo member, as a committed Communist.