

Pretoria to Investigate Mozambican Leader's Crash

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JOHANNESBURG, Oct. 21 — South Africa appointed a Supreme Court judge today to head an inquiry into the plane crash that killed President Samora M. Machel of Mozambique.

The announcement came as the hospitalized pilot of the Soviet-built TU-134 jet, a Russian, was quoted in press reports here as saying he had heard a loud noise just before the crash on Sunday night and concluded that his plane had been shot down.

Another survivor reportedly told the South African Foreign Minister, Roelof F. Botha, that there had been a shot or bang from within the plane shortly be-

fore the crash.

South African officials have blamed pilot error, possibly caused by a combination of bad weather conditions and confused radio signals that led the Soviet pilot to believe that he was over Maputo, the Mozambican capital.

The plane fell onto South African territory as it was flying to Mozambique from Zambia.

A South African official said the pilot, Vladimir Novoselov, had been admitted to Pretoria's leading military hospital, apparently suffering from a concussion. [An official quoted by Reuters said that the pilot was too ill to be interviewed, but that reporters might be

able to pay him a brief visit later.]

The Foreign Ministry in Pretoria announced today that Supreme Court Judge Cecyl Margo would lead the official inquiry into the crash, assisted by two South African aviation experts.

South African officials rejected the pilot's reported assertion that he had been shot down, calling it absurd, and reiterated an invitation to international aviation experts and the aircraft's manufacturers to join a preliminary investigation.

The aircraft's "black box" flight recorder was located and was put in a sealed container Monday in the pres-

ence of Mozambican officials.

The twin-engine jet, which was bringing President Machel back from an four-nation summit meeting in northern Zambia, had apparently aborted an initial attempt to land at Maputo because of bad weather.

Buffeted by storms, the plane plowed into a bare South African hillside near the point where the borders of Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa converge.

South African newspapers quoted charter pilots today as saying the pilot might have confused the navigational identification signals emitted by radio beacons in Maputo and in the South African town of Nelspruit.

If this were the case, South African pilots said, the Soviet pilot may have mistaken the lights of a South African

border town for those of Maputo.

According to South African officials, South African military radar began tracking President Machel's aircraft while it was flying over Zimbabwe and followed it as it headed south along the South African border with Mozambique. It disappeared from radar screens a few seconds before the crash, the officials said.

At first, South Africa said 26 people had been killed and 10 injured, including the pilot. The death toll was put at 34 today with the discovery of more bodies in wreckage strewn over a wide area.

In Maputo, meanwhile, Mozambicans began 60 days of official mourning for Mr. Machel, a bearded former guerrilla commander who had led the former Portuguese colony since its in-

dependence in 1975.

A central issue facing the country's only legal political party, the Mozambique Liberation Front, or Frelimo, was Mr. Machel's succession. One figure believed to be a front-runner is Foreign Minister Joaquim Alberto Chissano. He is generally viewed as more favorable to the Soviet Union than was Mr. Machel, who sought to balance Mozambique's alliance with Communist countries by seeking closer ties with the United States and other Western countries.

Another major issue will be the handling of the war with the Mozambique National Resistance. The rebel group has, in the past, received South African support.

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