

Chron
11/2/67

Machel crash probe to end soon

JOHANNESBURG — The findings of the inquiry into the plane crash which killed Mozambican President Samora Machel and 34 others are expected to be completed this week, a spokeswoman at the office of the chairman of the inquiry Mr Justice Cecil Margo said yesterday.

"I doubt whether the findings will be made public at this stage," she said.

The five-day inquiry into the crash at Komatipoort in October last year ended on January 26.

Aviation experts gave highly technical evidence before the five-member board, which included former Apollo 8 astronaut, Colonel Frank Borman.

In accordance with the Chicago Convention, which

made provision for the inquiry, the findings will be forwarded to Mozambique and then to the International Aviation Organisation.

Meanwhile Soviet experts are convinced that the crash was the result of South African sabotage.

In an interview with the Novosti Press Agency, Cde Ivan Vasin, deputy Civil Aviation Minister, said evidence gathered by Soviet experts on the tripartite commission investigating the crash together with Mozambique and South Africa showed the plane had been drawn off its course to crash on South African territory by Pretoria's armed forces.

"The circumstances of the plane crash leave no doubts

that it was a result of sabotage." The deliberate use of effective ground radio engineering facilities outside Maputo Airport led to the plane's deviation from the prescribed course and to its crash in South African territory, he said.

The aircraft had apparently been lured to its tragedy by powerful radio equipment at a temporary South African military camp near the crash site.

"It should be added that in South Africa at the site of the Tupolev-134's fall the tripartite commission discovered traces of a camp of an unknown type. It was located roughly 150 metres from the plane's debris. Witnesses say the camp was left one day after the crash." — Ziana-Sapa-Zana-Pana.