

Former MNR official throws new light on Machel's death

MAPUTO — New information about the death of Mozambican President Cde Samora Machel surfaced here yesterday when Paulo Oliveira, a former spokesman for the South African-backed MNR in Lisbon, who recently surrendered to the Mozambican authorities, addressed a Press conference.

According to Oliveira, the South Africans told the MNR office in Lisbon that it (the MNR) might have to claim responsibility for the crash which killed Cde Machel.

He said that during the early hours of October 20, 1986, he received a telephone call from another member of the representative's office in Lisbon, Evo Fernandes.

"Evo told me to listen to the news because something had happened to President Samora Machel's plane."

Oliveira yesterday told about 60 local and foreign

newsmen: "After that phone call from Fernandes there was another from Phalaborwa (in South Africa), through the normal contact used for passing on messages to us.

"They confirmed the news and gave a list of names of the people on board the aircraft. They confirmed the death of President Machel and told me to be on standby for it might be necessary for us (the MNR) to claim responsibility for the action."

Meanwhile, 26-year-old Australian missionary Ian Grey, was sentenced yesterday to ten-and-a-half years in prison for espionage and collaboration with the MNR bandits, the national news agency reported.

Grey could have received the death penalty.

Grey, arrested last November, was tried and sentenced by a military tribunal in proceedings that lasted only two days — Ziana-AIM-AP.