

HOW THE HIT WENT DOWN

'My job was to make sure Machel died'

MPIKELENI DUMA

HANS Louw, a former Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) killer, says Samora Machel was murdered – and he was one of the men who carried out the hit.

When Machel's plane smashed into a hillside in Mbuzini, near Komatipoort, on October 19 1986, it was no accident, Louw says.

He says he knows this because he was part of a clean-up team tasked with making sure that Machel died.

"I was part of the back-up team, armed with portable surface-to-air missiles, which was to shoot down the plane if the first plan failed," Louw says.

The back-up team was not activated.

Louw says, because plan A – luring Machel's Russian-made Tupolev plane fatally off course by using a false beacon worked, leading to the death of the former Mozambican president and 33 other people on board.

Louw says the false beacon

was put in position by military intelligence operatives of the

apartheid government.

He also told *Sowetan Sunday World* he was part of the squad that spied on Anton Lubowski, the Namibian activist.

Louw says he knows the names of Lubowski's killers and that they are now living in South Africa.

Louw, 40, shows remorse for the killing he has done and has harsh words for his former apartheid bosses.

"I never benefited from apartheid," Louw says. "I never believed in apartheid, but I was brainwashed. I have killed people for 19 years and now I need a second chance."

But Louw, a Namibian national, is locked up. He is serving a 28-year jail term at the Bavianspoort Prison outside Pretoria.

His conviction was for murders committed outside the service of the CCB.

In another shock revelation, taken from a top secret police file, *Sowetan Sunday World* can reveal that Edwin Mudingi, a former Selous Scout renegade, has also said he took part in the Machel hit.

And he confirms that Louw took part in the murder.

Mudingi is with the elite 43 Brigade of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

A 1987 board of inquiry into the Machel crash, headed by Judge Cecil Margo, found that the crash was caused by pilot error.

In 1998 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission also probed the crash. Its findings have not yet been made public.

Machel's murder is under intense investigation by the Scorpions, South Africa's elite crimebusters.

An officer of the Scorpions visited Louw in prison this week.

The spotlight has been thrown on Machel's killing after Graca Machel,

Machel's widow, and her husband, Nelson Mandela, asked that the murder be probed by the Scorpions.

Louw says he also helped to do the paperwork on the Machel murder.

He also told us that the Machel hit wasn't one of a kind.

In 1989, he says, he was part of a team that lured an Angolan military plane off course – once again using a false beacon.

The plane crashed and key figures of the Angolan military top brass were killed.

Louw recently confessed to *Sowetan Sunday World* that he was part of a death squad that killed five youths in a shebeen in Lulekani, Phalaborwa, on March 28 1986.

He and other alleged hitmen still serving in the SANDF are being charged with six counts of murder and 70 of attempted murder.

Louw will appear with the others on Tuesday in the Lulekani Magistrates' Court.

The other accused allegedly served in the Selous Scouts in former Rhodesia, and with the Renamo rebel movement in Mozambique.

The Scorpions are still investigating other crimes Louw has confessed to.

On June 15 *Sowetan Sunday World* spoke to Louw during a prison visit and he confessed to distributing weapons to fuel violence during the train massacres on the East Rand (Ekurhuleni) in the early 90s.

He said the weapons were bought from Mozambique using secret funds of the former SA Defence Force intelligence.

He said he decided to confess his killings after meeting Eugene de Kock, the former Vlakplaas commander who is in jail for life.

Louw resigned from the special forces and became a mercenary in Angola and Sierra Leone with Executive Outcomes.

He told *Sowetan Sunday World* that as shocking as his revelations may be, they are just the tip of the iceberg.

NO ACCIDENT: Samora Machel was murdered, says former CCB killer Hans Louw

