

NEW TWIST TO MACHEL MYSTERY

Former SADF general points at Chissano

MPIKELENI DUMA

A FORMER defence force general has implicated Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano in the death of Samora Machel.

Former military intelligence head General Tienie Groenewald said this week that Chissano was part of a conspiracy to assassinate the former Mozambican president in 1986.

Machel died when his plane crashed into a hillside at Mbuzzini in Mpumalanga on October 19 1986, after allegedly being lured off course by a false beacon set up by apartheid agents.

Chissano's spokesman, Antonio Matonse, denied yesterday that the Mozambican president was involved in killing Machel.

"There were commissions of inquiry by both the South African government and Russian authorities and ... Chissano was not mentioned by either commission," Matonse said.

But Groenewald said Chissano was part of a network of people who colluded with elements of the apartheid government and the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) to bring down Machel's plane.

"These individuals and Chissano were appraised of the details of the plot to kill Machel by the apartheid government and securocrats," Groenewald said.

"I know because I was once a

director of military intelligence of the SA Defence Force before I left and joined the Bureau of Information in 1986."

Groenewald said former foreign minister Pik Botha knew about the plot.

"I also have two impeccable sources in Maputo who can corroborate that senior Frelimo party political bureau members, including Chissano and his henchmen, were familiar with the plans to execute Machel," Groenewald said.

Groenewald, a trained South African Air Force pilot, said the shutting down of a Maputo Airport navigational beacon was supervised by a top officer of the Mozambican Air Force.

He said junior officers at the Maputo control tower could not have executed such an operation without supervision.

Botha has denied any prior knowledge of the death of Machel, saying the Margo Commission of Inquiry into the plane crash had found pilot error was to blame.

Groenewald, who is also a former Freedom Front member of Parliament, said: "If you read the Margo report and (if you were a) trained pilot like me, you would notice that the report leaves many questions unanswered.

*Sowetan
Sunday World
6/4/2003*

"They (the Mozambicans) knew from the first day to the last about the plane crash. There is no way they could not have known that Machel would die on October 1986 because they had close relations with elements of the apartheid government and CCB," Groenewald said.

"Chissano and the Frelimo politburo know that they have a story to tell in connection with the death of Machel."

A senior Renamo source said Machel was killed after refusing to run Mozambique like a South African homeland and after distancing himself from the Nkomati Accord signed between the two countries in 1984.

Former Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) head of investigations Advocate Dumisa Ntsebenza told *Sowetan Sunday World* yesterday that Groenewald's story seemed credible.

Ntsebenza said it was now clear why the Frelimo central committee had not undertaken an analysis of Machel's death.

"It had one for former Frelimo president Eduardo Mondlane - why not Machel? It is really puzzling," Ntsebenza said.

He said Groenewald's revelations confirmed TRC investigations that there had been a strong military build-up at the Hoedspruit Air Force Base before the plane crash.