

Pretoria - Former Military Intelligence chief Tienie Groenewald and ex-Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha on Monday denied allegations the governments of Mozambique and South Africa were involved in a plot to murder ex-Mozambican President Samora Machel.

This follows weekend reports that both the former Mozambican Foreign Affairs Minister Joachim Chissano and Botha were aware of the plot.

Groenewald said on Monday that as a qualified pilot he'd simply sketched a scenario of who would have to be involved should it be true that the Maputo beacon be switched off just before Machel's aircraft was due to land.

This, together with alleged army involvement in placing a false beacon to force the aircraft off course, have repeatedly been investigated without success.

Botha dismissed the allegations on Monday as "complete nonsense". He added that every conceivable allegation of the supposed plot had been picked apart since the accident in 1986, and not a shred of evidence had been found.

He said it was "astounding" that some people insisted on keeping the alleged plot alive after all these years. Groenewald said he did not have any information on the incident. At the time of the accident he was working for the Bureau of Information, which was not involved in operational matters.