

ANC Statement on Machel's Death: "Suspicion" of Pretoria's "Full Responsibility"

PANA in English 1043 gmt 21 Oct 86

Text of dispatch datelined Dakar, 21st October:

The ANC has said that it "learnt with shock and a great sense of grief of the tragic and untimely death of President Samora Moises Machel, President and Field Marshal of the Republic of Mozambique", together with seven other Mozambican leaders and officials. In a statement released to PANA yesterday, the ANC said that "Cdr Samora personified the close and comradely links between the sister liberation movements of the ANC and Frelimo, forged in the crucible of struggles of our respective peoples against colonialism".

It said as a founder member of Frelimo and later its leader and President of the Republic of Mozambique, Machel's constant concern was the consolidation of the independence of Mozambique and the enhancing of the struggle for the total liberation of the African continent, including the liberation of South Africa and Namibia. "His vision of a free Africa extended also to the economic emancipation [words indistinct] region and he lent his immense skills to the creation of SADCC [Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference] as a vehicle for regional economic co-operation," he said.

The ANC regretted that the tragic loss of this great visionary of African liberation came at a critical juncture in the history of the continent and region when all the countries of the sub-continent are under armed invasion by the Pretoria regime adding: "Indeed the People's Republic of Mozambique, which wrested independence from Portuguese colonialism in a protracted armed struggle, has never known peace since 1975."

Mozambique and the other countries of the region have been subjected to an unrelenting campaign of sabotage and destabilisation by Pretoria. The latest threats against Mozambique, only seven days before this tragedy, by the racist Defence Minister, Magnus Malan, serve to strengthen our suspicion that Pretoria bears full responsibility for it, the statement said.

It further states that "the passing of Comrade Machel, in circumstances that still need to be fully resolved, is a loss to the Mozambican people, from amongst whose ranks he rose to lead his country to liberation. Southern Africa, the continent and indeed the entire international community have lost an outstanding leader whose charismatic figure will be sorely missed in the fora of the world." "The ANC and the people of South Africa dip their revolutionary banners in homage to this indefatigable freedom fighter and African revolutionary. Our movement draws inspiration from his example," it said. We are confident that under the sterling leadership of the Central Committee of the Frelimo Party, the Mozambican people will rise beyond this tragedy and, together with their compatriots in the region, will redouble their efforts in defence of their sovereignty and for the realisation of the ideals for which Samora Moises Machel has striven and laid down his life.

To the bereaved family, our comrade in Frelimo and the Mozambican people, we offer our heartfelt condolences in this hour of great sorrow. The spear of the warrior has fallen, let us pick it up as we say: a luta continua, a vitoria e certa, said the ANC statement.