

Diplomatic Offices Attacked in Harare In Protest Over Mozambican's Death

1HT By Sheila Rule 22/10/1980
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HARARE, Zimbabwe — Hundreds of youths attacked diplomatic offices, overturned cars and threw firebombs on Tuesday in response to allegations that South Africa was behind the death of President Samora Machel of Mozambique.

The youths, mainly black, assaulted South African commercial establishments, stoned the U.S. Embassy and the Malawi High Commission and attacked white pedestrians and motorists.

The police said that many people were injured, but none seriously. More than 50 demonstrators were

arrested during three hours of rioting, the authorities said.

The South African government, in a move to quell charges that it was involved in the crash Sunday

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night in South Africa of Mr. Machel's jet aircraft, has invited international aviation experts and Mozambicans to take part in an inquiry into the incident.

South African newspapers have said that the plane strayed over South African territory in bad weather as it carried Mr. Machel

home from a meeting of African leaders in Zambia.

The Zimbabwean youths, whose numbers swelled to more than 1,000 at the peak of the protest, set fire to a South African Airways office in the city center and stoned a building housing the South African trade mission.

In addition to breaking windows at the U.S. Embassy and the building housing the High Commission of Malawi, they set fire to the offices of Air Malawi. The Malawi government has been accused of supporting rebels seeking to topple the Mozambican government.

White pedestrians and motorists may have been most surprised by the attacks on them in a country that prides itself on good race relations after a war to end white domination. The demonstrators randomly struck at whites on the city streets, smashing their windshields, pulling them out of their cars and beating them.

The protest was viewed here as one of the most violent since this country gained its independence in 1980.

The reaction to Mr. Machel's death seemed to highlight the strong personal bond between Mr. Machel and Zimbabwe's prime minister, Robert Mugabe. Mozambique was the base for Mr. Mugabe's guerrilla army in the battle to end white Rhodesian rule in the 1970s.

The anger of the protesters, many of them students from the University of Zimbabwe, may have been fueled by reports in the government-controlled press since Sunday.

In an editorial, The Herald newspaper said that the death of Mr. Machel came after "persistent reports" that the Mozambican leader had been "singled out" by the South African authorities for assassination.

In light of "threats" from Pretoria, the newspaper said, "the fact that the presidential aircraft exceeded its destination and then crashed inside South Africa cannot be treated simply as coincidence," adding: "The most likely cause of the crash remains a direct South African attack on the presidential plane."

[In Lusaka, Zambia, President Kenneth Kaunda accused the South African government of being responsible for the plane crash that killed Mr. Machel. The Associated Press reported.

"South Africa stands on the dock until proved otherwise," Mr. Kaunda said. "I accuse them openly."]]

A spokesman for the U.S. Embassy said that protesters broke 12 windows at the embassy and that three employees received minor injuries from flying glass and rocks.

The spokesman said that, although police in full riot gear were stationed at the embassy well before the youths arrived, the security forces allowed the demonstrators to attack the building for about 10 minutes before moving in with tear gas.

He said that the embassy would send a formal letter of protest to the Zimbabwean government.

The South African authorities have also sent a message to Zimbabwe, calling on the government to ensure the safety of South Africans.