Machel’s Death Sets Off a Riot in Zimbabwe

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Zimbabwe, Oct. 21 — Hundreds of youths rioted here today in response to charges that South Africa was behind the death of President Samora Machel of Mozambique.

They assaulted South African commercial establishments, stoned the United States Embassy and randomly attacked white pedestrians and motorists.

The demonstrators chanted war songs and carried signs such as “Blood will flow from this black country; cast our lot with Machel,” referring to President P. W. Botha of South Africa.

The South African Government, in a move to quell charges that it was involved in the crash Sunday night in South Africa of President Machel’s jet, has invited international aviation experts and Mozambicans to take part in an investigation to determine the cause of the accident.

In addition to breaking windows at the American Embassy and the building housing the High Commission of Malawi, they set fire to the offices of Air Malawi. The Malawian government has been accused of supporting rebel organizations in opposition to the Mozambican government.

White pedestrians and motorists may have been surprised by the attacks on them in a country that prides itself on good race relations.

The demonstrators randomly struck whites on the city streets, smashing the windows of their cars and beating them.

An American Embassy spokesman said that Michael Williams, a part-time correspondent for several organizations, was knocked off his bicycle and beaten repeatedly while a policeman watched from 20 feet away. Mr. Williams was not seriously hurt, according to the spokesman.

The protest was viewed here as one of the most violent since this country switched from racial violence to political violence.

In reaction to President Machel’s death, seeming in some way to highlight the growing personal bond between Mr. Machel and Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, it was the base for the Mozambique’s guerrilla army in the battle to bring white Rhodesian rule in the 1970s, returned today from a four-day private visit to London, has yet to make a public statement on the death of Mr. Machel, who was a key figure among African leaders opposed to apartheid.

The anger of the protesters, many of them students from the University of Zimbabwe, may have been fueled by reports in the Government-owned press for the last three days.

The article referred to a reported comment by Defense Minister Magnus Malan of South Africa this month that if Mr. Machel chose “terrorism and murder,” the South African Embassy would send a formal letter of protest to the Zimbabwean Government.

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