

Allegations and Speculation about Machel Crash

(a) Capital Radio, Umtata in English (i) 1100 gmt 20 Oct 86 (ii) 0600 gmt 21 Oct 86

(i) Excerpts from report:

It has been confirmed that Samora Machel is dead. The confirmation comes from the South Africa State President, rebel MNR [Mozambique National Resistance] officials and Swazi government authorities. The Mozambican leader was one of 38 people who went down in a Soviet-built twin-engine Tupolev jet last night. . .

The African National Congress has charged the Pretoria government with responsibility for the plane crash. An official of the outlawed organisation says either the South African government is guilty of what he calls a heinous crime, or responsibility lies with its henchmen, the MNR.

(ii) Excerpt from report:

Media speculation continues as to the causes of the plane crash that killed Mozambican President Samora Machel and 28 others. The 'Business Day' newspaper reports that early evidence suggests that bad weather and pilot error are to blame, but claims are mounting that the plane was shot down. A survivor says there was a large bang inside the plane before the crash and the Russian pilot, who also survived, confirms this.

But South African government sources say the plane was being monitored on South African radar and was flying in virtually zero visibility as it flew down the South African-Mozambique border. They say the pilot may have mistaken the lights of Komatipoort for those of Maputo and turned west into South African airspace instead of east to Maputo. This theory has been supported by aviation sources in Maputo, who say the pilot's last radio message was that he could not pick up the twin radio beams from Maputo airport on which his instrument landing system was based. . .

(b) Shihata/PANA in English 1635 gmt 20 Oct 86

Text of dispatch datelined Dar es Salaam, 20th October:

The Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) of South Africa said in a statement in Dar es Salaam today that it has received news of the tragic death of Mozambican President Samora Machel with the "greatest shock". The statement said: "PAC holds the racist

South African regime wholly responsible for the wanton murder of this great son of Africa." The statement said that South Africa has ground-to-air missiles in Komatipoort, where the plane crashed, and along the Mozambique-South Africa border.

It went on: "The racist regime is the sole cause of death and destruction in the region, hence the international community and all peace-loving people the world over must support the frontline and neighbouring states to defend themselves against this regional bully." PAC has regarded Machel's death as a great loss "not only to Mozambique but to Africa as a whole and to the liberation struggle in Azania in particular". The statement said his death has come at a time when southern Africa needed him most.

(c) SAPA in English 1541 gmt 20 Oct 86

Text of dispatch datelined Johannesburg, 20th October:

The United Democratic Front [UDF] expressed its "deep shock at the tragic and untimely death of President Samora Machel and other senior Mozambican officials at the weekend". "The death has come at a time when the heroic people of Mozambique need their leadership and wisdom more than ever before", the UDF said in a statement released in Johannesburg today. "State President Mr P.W. Botha will have to do better than pretend that he is shocked and aggrieved at this terrible misfortune that has befallen one of the staunchest opponents of apartheid. If anything, what South Africa has been saying about and doing in Mozambique through its Renamo surrogates gives us reasonable grounds to suspect South African involvement in this plane crash. We know that Mozambicans are a people with tremendous courage and resilience. We are confident that a thousand more Machel's will emerge to take up from where our fallen comrades have left off. Their struggle is our struggle."