

Maputo Leaders Imply Pretoria, Rebels Were Involved in Plane Crash

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MAPUTO, Mozambique — The leadership of Mozambique has for the first time implied that neighboring South Africa and rightist rebels were involved in the death of President Samora Machel, who was killed in a plane crash Oct. 19.

The official Radio Maputo quoted Foreign Minister Joaquim A. Chissano, the leading contender to succeed Mr. Machel, as saying Saturday that "armed banditry and apartheid" were the main culprits in the president's death.

The radio said that Mr. Chissano made the accusation while speaking to relatives of a Mozambican Foreign Ministry official, João Tomas Mavesse, one of 33 other persons killed in the crash.

Radio Maputo did not amplify on the minister's statement.

The information minister, Teodato Hinguana, was quoted by the official Mozambican press agency AIM as saying: "The Mozambican government certainly does not ex-

clude the possibility that South Africa was involved in the death of our president."

He said that the crash could have been caused "by criminal action," AIM reported.

Rebels of the Mozambican National Resistance, backed by South Africa, have been fighting Mr. Machel's government since he led the former Portuguese colony to independence in 1975.

Both the guerrillas and South Africa have denied involvement in the death of Mr. Machel, whose Soviet-built Tupolev jet crashed just inside South African territory shortly before it was due to land in Maputo.

The accusations against South Africa appeared inevitable, given the long-standing hostile relations between the region's biggest power and its neighbors.

South Africa has said that the most probable cause of the crash was navigational error during bad weather and has invited Soviet and Mozambican experts to join its investigation.

The theory of navigational error has been given increasing credence by Western diplomats in Zimbabwe, who have said privately that their embassies in Mozambique received similar information.

President Quett Masire of Botswana said Friday night: "No one believes the word of the South African government because Pretoria has in the past committed acts of murder and destruction in Mozambique."

In the past few years, South Africa has struck in Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe against what it has called bases used by guerrillas fighting the Pretoria government.

Less than two weeks ago, Defense Minister Magnus Malan of South Africa warned the region's black-ruled nations that they must choose "either peace and cooperation or conflict." He said that Mr. Machel had chosen "the path of terror."

■ Funeral Processions

Five funeral processions rolled through Maputo on Sunday, carrying the bodies of 19 persons who also died in the crash that killed Mr. Machel. The Associated Press reported.

Independence Square, in the center of Maputo, was filled with thousands of people who stood in long, silent lines outside the City Hall where Mr. Machel's body has been lying in state since Friday.

The 19 other victims, including a cabinet minister, government aides, journalists and a stewardess, were placed in the hall Sunday, according to the press.

President Aristides Pereira of Cape Verde was the first head of state to arrive in Maputo for Mr. Machel's funeral Tuesday. Most of the other victims will be buried the following day. Two were buried earlier.

Maureen Reagan, daughter of President Ronald Reagan, will represent the president.