

# Nkomati back in

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# balance — Barratt

By Colleen Ryan, Political Reporter

The death of President Machel has put the Nkomati Accord back in the balance, says Professor John Barratt, director of the South African Institute of International Affairs.

The future of the accord between South Africa and Mozambique now hinged on the power struggle within the Frelimo Government.

He told *The Star* that even before President Machel's death the accord was in jeopardy with both countries claiming infringements.

South African Minister of Defence General Magnus Malan warned this month that President Machel had "the Nkomati Accord in his hands" and South Africa would "react accordingly" if Mozambique continued harbour ANC members.

## Several choices

The accord was signed by President Machel and South African State President Mr Botha in 1984. Mozambique said it would stop supporting the ANC, South Africa promised no further aid to the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR).

Professor Barratt said: "The new leadership may decide to mend bridges with South Africa and preserve the accord, but it could decide such an attempt is futile."

There are several choices for a new Mozambique president: two are General Armando Guebuza, Minister in the President's Office and opposed to the accord, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr

Joaquim Chissano, regarded as more pragmatic.

Professor Barratt said President Machel's death would probably contribute to greater instability in the region. There was little chance of a settlement between Frelimo and the MNR.

He said: "The MNR has no clear political programme or strong leader and tends to be a collection of groups united by their opposition to the present government.

"It lacks popular support and if it were to come to power Frelimo would go back to the bush and continue the guerilla war. It's a no-win situation."

Dr Andre Thomashausen, Professor of Law at the Unisa who has close contact with the MNR, said it was likely the new Frelimo leader would back the accord to limit support for the MNR, but the war would continue indefinitely without a negotiated settlement.

He did not believe the MNR was without popular support or a clear ideology.

There have been frequent claims that the MNR was or is a puppet movement, backed first by Rhodesia and later by South Africa. Paul Fauvet of Mozambique's national news agency AIM earlier this year described the MNR as "an instrument of aggression, created by Rhodesian intelligence in 1976".

In 1980, with Zimbabwe's independence looming, the MNR had to change its rear base in a hurry. "South African military intelligence took over the operation and flew it to the Transvaal where it has been based ever since."