

Chissano elected as Mozambique leader

From Paul Fauvet
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The Central Committee of Mozambique's ruling Frelimo Party on Monday elected the country's Foreign Minister, Mr Joaquim Chissano, to succeed President Samora Machel who died in the as yet unexplained air crash in South Africa two weeks ago.

Mr Chissano, aged 47, was elected president of the party, and, under the constitution, this means that he automatically becomes Head of State and Commander in Chief of the armed forces.

The decision was announced in the form of a Central Committee resolution read out by the senior figure in Mozambican politics, Frelimo Politburo member, Marcelino dos Santos.

No political changes are expected under Mr Chissano's leadership.

He has been in the Frelimo leadership for the past 20 years, and was a close political associate of Mr Machel.

During the war for independence from Portugal he was in charge of the Frelimo Security Department, and was a member of the highest Frelimo policy-making body, the Politico-Military Committee. Because of his role in the war, Mr Chissano holds the rank of major-general, although he has not undertaken operational military duties since independence.

Mr Machel appointed him Foreign Minister in July, 1975, and he held this position uninterruptedly until now. As a



member of the 11-man Frelimo politburo, the country's most powerful body, Mr Chissano was fully involved in all big political decisions since independence.

He will continue Mr Machel's intransigent position towards the South African-backed rebels of the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR).

Some of the toughest speeches this year against any negotiations with the MNR were made by Mr Chissano, and on Monday, immediately after his election, Mr Chissano pledged to continue the war against the MNR to the finish.

The Mozambique Government holds that any negotiations must be with those who control the MNR — the South Africans—and not with the rebels themselves.

Mr Chissano in his Monday speech also pledged to emulate Mr Machel by taking a hard line against all illegalities and abuses of power.