

Maputo security chief defects

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From Patrick Laurence 013
in Johannesburg

Mozambique's Director of National Security, Mr George Costa, has defected to South Africa, the chief of South Africa's security police, Lt-Gen Johan Coetzee, said yesterday.

Mr Costa and two colleagues from Mozambique were in South Africa on an official visit for discussions on "routine matters" such as drug smuggling and border control when Mr Costa applied for political asylum in South Africa.

Mr Costa decided not to re-

turn to Mozambique when he arrived at Jan Smuts airport, Johannesburg, to board a flight to Maputo in Mozambique. General Coetzee told a news conference that Mr Costa had made the decision of his own free will.

South Africa's outlawed African National Congress has a strong presence in Mozambique. Pretoria's security chiefs believe that ANC forces in Mozambique play a pivotal role in the ANC's insurgency campaign in South Africa. Mr Costa should thus be able to provide

South Africa with valuable information.

Mozambique's Ministry of Information was unaware of Mr Costa's reported defection yesterday.

A year ago, a Mozambique pilot, Lt Francisco Bomba, landed his Soviet-built Mig17 at a South African military base near the border and asked for asylum. Lt Bomba, who was trained in the Soviet Union, now works for the South African Defence Force as a translator and evaluator of Soviet propaganda.