

Deals with a defector

MR JORGE COSTA, former Director of Security in Mozambique, is busily divulging a vast amount of information about his country to South African intelligence chiefs. Their elation at their latest catch is understandable. Mr Costa can tell them much about the inner workings of President Machel's government, efforts to contain an active resistance movement and the location of East German and Cuban advisers in Mozambique. More important from South Africa's point of view, he is said to know intimately the personalities, plans and activities of African National Congress officials there.

Mr Costa, however, is not just a simple patriotic Mozambican, appalled at increasing Soviet influence in his beloved country and hoping to restore true national independence from exile. He is a man against whom horrifying allegations of torture and execution

have been made by people with first-hand experience of his activities as a Maputo security chief. Members of the Portuguese community in South Africa are demanding his immediate expulsion.

The South African government, in considering Mr Costa's application for political asylum, should investigate these allegations before taking a decision. Defections and intelligence-gathering result in grubby deals throughout the world. If the allegations against Mr Costa are true, he can be sent on to some country that will have him, if need be with another identity. But, if he is the brutal sadist his accusers claim, government gratitude should not result in his being granted permanent residence and ultimate South African citizenship. This would give affront to a large section of the South African community, not least to those who still believe in civilized standards and the decent treatment of fellow human beings.

Cape Times 17/6/82