

Costa still awaits asylum

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By Joao Santa Rita

The former director of Mozambican National Security, Mr Jorge Costa, has not yet been granted political asylum in South Africa. But his acceptance as a resident is considered to be a formality.

Mr Costa, who has been keeping a low profile since his defection two months ago, is believed to be in the Pretoria area while he undergoes continued de-briefing sessions with various security services.

It is understood that Mr Costa wants to avoid the Press because of the adverse publicity

he received after his arrival in the country.

Several members of the Portuguese community claimed that he was responsible for harassment of prisoners in the months immediately after Mozambique's independence.

Two local Portuguese newspapers carried editorials calling for his expulsion from South Africa.

The Mozambican Government alleged that Mr Costa's defection was connected with investigations ordered by President Samora Machel into alleged police brutality and accusations made

against Mr Costa by former Portuguese collaborators.

The ostensible reason for his defection was that control of Mozambican security and intelligence was to be taken over by Eastern Europeans.

Although Mr Costa's reasons for defection appear less convincing than those of former Mozambican Air Force pilot, Lieutenant Adriano Bomba, it is considered unlikely that he will be expelled from South Africa despite the views of the Portuguese community.

Ironically, it is possible that, among those questioning Mr Costa are former members of PIDE, the Portuguese secret police, who are likely to be anything but sympathetic to his cause.

Undoubtedly, as former head of security for the Machel Government, Mr Costa has intelligence value which will almost certainly outweigh other considerations when the desirability of his presence in South Africa is finally decided.