

RUTH FIRST KILLED BY BOMB

Professor Ruth First, a leading writer and academic from the South African Liberation movement, died in Maputo today, murdered by a letter bomb.

She died at about 4.30pm. A violent explosion ripped through her office in Maputo's Eduardo Mondlane University, as she opened an envelope.

Ruth First was Director of Research at the University's Centre of African Studies (CAS). Also in her office were Mozambican Professor Aquino de Braganca who is head of the Centre, Dr Bridget O'Laughlin a U.S. Lecturer at the Centre, and South African social scientist, Pallo Jordan. Mr Jordan had attended last week's UNESCO sponsored conference on social sciences held at the university. All three were wounded in the explosion but are out of danger. Another lecturer at CAS, Dr Mark Wuyts, was nearby when the blast occurred. He was not hurt but he is suffering from shock.

The Mozambican authorities began investiga-

tions immediately at the scene of the explosion, which has caused extensive damage. An official spokesman told AIM that these investigations are continuing. The attack on Ruth First follows the murder or attempted murder of leading members and representatives of the African National Congress of South Africa in Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zambia and England. A spokesman for Mozambican security commented 'The attack is similar in nature to others carried out in the region and which were proved to be the work of the South African Secret Services.'

Ruth First was deeply respected for her commitment to the liberation struggle of the South African people. She was one of the first 90-day detainees under the apartheid regime's draconian security legislation, and wrote about her experiences of solitary confinement in a South African jail in her book 117 DAYS ... This book made an important international impact and helped reveal to the world public opinion the true nature of apartheid. She was known as one of the finest intellectuals in her generation of South Africans. Among her books were *The Barrel of a Gun* - a study of military rule in Africa, a biography of the South African feminist, Olive Schreiner, and a study of Modern Libya. She also co-authored *The South African Connection* - which illustrated the ways in which western companies prop up the apartheid regime.

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