

# Parcel bomb kills S. African exile

LISBON (Reuter). Exiled South African Marxist and radical author Ruth First was killed by a parcel bomb in the Mozambique capital Maputo on Tuesday. She was regarded by many as the intellectual power behind the banned African National Congress (ANC).

The Portuguese news agency ANOP said three other people, including Mozambique's leading ideologist Aquino de Braganza, were injured when the bomb exploded in the African Study Centre at Maputo University.

First, 59, whose husband Joe Slovo is a senior leader of the banned South African Communist Party and a leading ANC strategist, was opening the package when it exploded, ANOP said. It was not immediately clear where the parcel originated.

First and Slovo were believed by South African security officials to be key figures in planning ANC sabotage attacks in South Africa.

First was one of the first people detained under South Africa's

stringent security laws. In 1956 she was arrested for high treason, although the charge was dropped two years later.

She was subsequently restricted to the Johannesburg area under the Suppression of Communism Act, and two magazines she edited were banned.

Her detention in 1963 led her to write *117 Days*, a classic description of solitary confinement. She left South Africa on an exit visa the following year.

First was worshipped by black South African exiles, who referred to her as "The high priestess" of the South African Communist Party. She was also a noted author and won praise for her examination of apartheid in *The Barrel of a Gun*.

Working out of Maputo, First and Slovo were suspected of planning and coordinating several hundred ANC raids into South Africa. The most spectacular was the 1980 attack on the high-security Sasol plant, which produces oil from coal.

There has been no official comment in South Africa on First's death but reports about her have been displayed prominently in all the major newspapers.

The ANC yesterday accused South Africa of being behind First's death. In a statement from its London office, the ANC said Pretoria had embarked on a "strategy of physical elimination of the leaders, members and supporters of the ANC, both inside and outside the South African borders."

Meanwhile, in Johannesburg, South Africa's Minister for Law and Order Louis le Grange said yesterday that Ernest Dipale committed suicide in police detention despite being held in a cell especially modified to prevent inmates from harming themselves.

Dipale was found hanging in his cell in Johannesburg's John Vorster Square police station on August 8. An autopsy was carried out on Dipale last week but the findings have not been published. (UPI, AP Reuter)