

## The Death of Ruth First (ME/7109/B/8)

(a) Addis Ababa Radio Freedom in English 1930 gmt 19 Aug 82

Text of ANC national executive committee statement on "the assassination of Comrade Ruth First":

Once more the fascist Pretoria regime, faced with the ever-growing wrath and revolutionary (?zeal) of our people inside South Africa and increasing isolation internationally, has committed yet another cowardly and dastardly act of murder, by assassinating Comrade Ruth First in Maputo, Mozambique, on Tuesday [17th August].

Comrade Ruth First, an outstanding member of the ANC, the vanguard liberation movement in South Africa, a journalist of great talent, a writer and revolutionary, was brutally killed by the South African racists and their agents when she opened a parcel bomb at the Eduardo Mondlane University, where she was working as a part of her contribution to the efforts of reconstruction in newly-independent Mozambique.

The racist regime, desperate to liquidate the liberation forces, has now embarked on a strategy of physical elimination of the leaders, members and supporters of the ANC, both inside and outside the South African borders. The aim is to deprive our movement of its trusted and tried leadership and to intimidate and demoralize the rest of the oppressed and struggling masses of our people.

In pursuit of this goal, they have cold-bloodedly assassinated [name indistinct], Dr Aggett, [name indistinct] inside the country; (?Bantu) Garvey in Harare; the Matola 12 in Maputo; Comrade Nzima [phonetic] and his wife in Swaziland; and now Ruth First, again in Maputo, (?among) the most recent acts of terrorism by the South African racist rulers.

Ruth First, therefore, has been selected by the racists because of her unswerving dedication to the liberation struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa. She dedicated all her talents and life to the advancement of this noble ideal. In fact, her contribution to the cause of liberation has made its mark even across our national borders, in the neighbouring countries and beyond.

This act of banditry against the ANC and our cause of liberation will never deter us from pursuing and intensifying the struggle until final victory. Ruth First and all of the other martyrs and heroes of our struggle are a source of inspiration and encouragement to us all.

The ANC expressed heartfelt condolences to her family, to Comrade Jose Slovo, her husband, lifetime companion and comrade-in-arms.

The life of Comrade Ruth First has not been in vain. Our victory is certain. [Slogan in vernacular.]

(b) Johannesburg in English for abroad 2100 gmt 20 Aug 82

Text of report:

Various witnesses and the American charge d'affaires in Maputo say the letter bomb which killed a senior leader of the African National Congress in the city on Tuesday,

Mrs Ruth First, was in an unsealed envelope mailed from the American Embassy. It was apparently rigged in the Mozambican capital. One of the survivors of the blast, Prof Aquino de Braganca, a senior adviser to President Machel, told visitors at his hospital bed that the blast came as Mrs First opened a large-format envelope containing an American Government publication, and closed only with a metal clip. The American charge d'affaires, Mr William Twaddell, told the AFP news agency that he was meeting Mozambican authorities today. Two other people in the room are also recovering in hospital following the blast. Mrs First played a leading role in the activities of the terrorist organization, which is banned in South Africa.