

# South Africa is blamed for First's murder

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From Joseph Hanlon  
in Maputo

Two powerful bombs were involved in the killing on Tuesday of Ruth First. The other had been intended for Aquino de Braganca, director of the Centre for African Studies in Maputo.

Ruth First was research director of the centre and its driving force. During a meeting in her office on Tuesday afternoon, she was opening

the raid on the houses of ANC members in the Maputo suburb of Matola in January 1981. But this killing comes just two months after a high Mozambican security official, Jorge Costa, defected to South Africa. Costa would have known the details of security precautions for ANC officials here.

First had been research director of the Centre for African Studies since 1978. And she moulded it into a group which did research of high academic standard, but which had practical application to the problems facing Mozambique's transition to socialism.

One of her best known projects was a study of Mozambicans who had been miners in South Africa, and it led to one of the first conferences which brought together all of the Labour-exporting states of Africa (in Lusaka in 1978).

She remained a militant member of both the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party, and was the wife of the ANC leader, Joe Slovo. But First felt that the liberation struggle must be seen in a regional context, and that South African refugees had a responsibility to help their host countries.

Thus she had little involvement in the day-to-day running of the ANC.

In a statement issued in London yesterday, the ANC said that South Africa, "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 tested and tried leadership, and to intimidate and demoralise the rest of the oppressed and struggling masses of our people."

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**THERE is to be a 12-hour vigil, from 9 am to 9 pm today outside South Africa House in London, on the first anniversary of death sentences passed on three ANC members. The appeals for Johannes Shabangu, Anthony Tsotsobe, and David Moise, will be heard next month. Between 1 pm and 2 pm the vigil will be transformed into a special remembrance of Ruth First.**

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her post, as she often did during meetings. She came across two identical letters, one addressed to her and the other to Braganca. When he opened his, it failed to go off. But when First opened hers, there was a blast powerful enough to kill her instantly and to blow a large hole in the outer cement wall of her office.

Braganca, Professor Bridget O'Laughlin, an American lecturer at the centre, and a visiting South African sociologist, Pallo Jordan, remain in hospital with burns and cuts.

The Mozambican Government pointed to other recent bomb attacks on ANC leaders in neighbouring countries, such as the recent car bomb which killed top ANC leaders in Swaziland. And they laid the blame for this bomb to the "South African secret service."

There had been no attacks on ANC members here since