

Apartheid's foes face terror campaign

By Terry Bell

LONDON —

Ruth First, the anti-apartheid activist killed by a letter bomb in Maputo last month, was the latest victim of a terror campaign against South African exiles which has been growing in intensity over the past two years.

Last month in Maseru, Lesotho, several bombs exploded outside the home of another South African, Temba Banzi, seriously injuring his wife and causing extensive damage to the house and the neighboring home of the country's official African National Congress representative, Temba Hani, whose own home was bombed two years ago.

The attack came just two months after the deaths in nearby Swaziland of a married couple who had been trade union organizers in the South African port city of Durban until they fled across the border in 1977. Petrus and Jabulile Nzima died instantly when a bomb in their car exploded as they drove off.

The Nzimas were active in the South African Con-

gress of Trade Union, one of the six outlawed South African organizations which form a "congress alliance" headed by the 70-year-old nationalist movement, the African National Congress.

It is members and supporters of the ANC who are the targets of this international campaign, conducted largely in the countries sharing borders with the apartheid state, although the campaign obviously dovetails with a wider effort to destabilize neighboring governments potentially — or outspokenly — unfriendly to Pretoria.

Most of the victims have not been high-ranking members of the ANC, let alone members of its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation).

Anglican priest John Osmers lost his right hand when a bomb in a parcel of books exploded in the living room of his Lesotho home in 1979. The parcel, apparently untampered with, was one of a regular consignment via South Africa. As the string around the parcel was cut, the bomb exploded. A

young student assisting Osmers lost the ends of three fingers and another exile in the room, Phyllis Naidoo, suffered extensive injuries to her eyes and back.

The next year, on June 5, 1980, an ANC member, Patrick Makau, and a seven-year-old girl died when two houses occupied by South African refugees in Swaziland were blown up.

A number of other "refugee houses" in Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana have also been blown up in recent months, without loss of life.

The message that even very senior members of the nationalist organization are not safe was brought home last year with the killing of Joe Gqabi, the ANC representative in Zimbabwe. On Feb. 14 a 15 lb bomb was found wired to his car, set to detonate when he drove out of his garage. Security precautions were doubled. But five months later Gqabi was dead, shot at point blank range in his car in what investigators referred to as "a professional job."

Arab News

Jiddah, Saudi Arabia

Arab News [Jiddah], date uncertain but probably mid-September 1982