

WORLDWIDE

Mozambique plane crash toll now 49^x

MAPUTO.

THE death toll in Sunday's Mozambican air disaster stands at 49 and not 44 as earlier reported, Aim reported yesterday.

The crash occurred when an Antonov-26 of the Mozambican Air Force developed engine trouble shortly after take-off. It attempted to return to Pemba Airport, but crashed in flames a few hundred metres from the runway.

Among the dead are all six members of the Antonov's crew: the pilot, Commander Varuga, co-pilot Kuznetsov, and navigator Tonkonov, all of Soviet nationality, and three Mozambicans, flight engineer Fernando Magala, radio operator Livson Fungulane, and boarding officer Lopes Joao Norte.

On Monday night members of a committee of inquiry set up to investigate the crash, led by Minister in the Presidency Armando Guebuza and air force commander Lt-Gen. Antonio Hama Thai, returned to Maputo.

On the same plane were the five survivors of the disaster, four men and a woman, whose names Aim has not yet been able to confirm.

All the survivors are seriously injured, and were taken immediately by ambulance to Maputo Central Hospital.

Also in the plane was the coffin containing the remains of Cde Maria Chipande, wife of Defence Minister General Alberto

Chipande.

Funerals of some of the dead were held in Pemba on Monday, while work on the full identification of all the bodies continued.

Flags were flying at half-mast throughout Mozambique yesterday, and Radio Mozambique was playing solemn music. A day of national mourning was decreed by the government, the political bureau of the Frelimo party and the

standing committee of the People's Assembly, the Mozambican parliament, in recognition of the "great loss to the nation" that the disaster involved.

Sunday's accident was the worst air disaster in Mozambique's history.

In Moscow, President Samora Machel has cut short his visit to the Soviet Union and is returning to Maputo after hearing the news of the crash.
— Ziana-Aim-Shihata.