

MOCAMBIQUE

Vigilante groups set up after bomb blast



One of the best known landmarks in Maputo, capital of Mocambique, the ever-crowded Scala tearoom and pavement café, right in the heart of the city, was blown up last week by a powerful explosion which injured 55 people, four of them critically.

Apart from shattering the popular meeting place of locals and visitors and the nearby stores, the blast also seriously thwarted the efforts being made by the ruling Marxist regime of President Samora Machel to present to the world an image of order and stability.

It was, in Frelimo's words, a "spectacular" action. As such, it could not possibly be kept out of the news and Machel's henchmen had no option but to use it to whip up an emotional reaction among the party militants. In the process, lots of cats were let out of the bag as startling disclosures followed the "enemy action".

A communique broadcast by the Frelimo-controlled Radio Mocambique admitted that the explosion was "part of a series of sabotage attempts which we have been experiencing in various sectors of our society".

Claimed Frelimo: "This is not an isolated action. It follows a common pattern of attacks every time demonstrations are staged to show support for our socialist option." Random examples were quoted in the communique: "On workers' international day, May 1, a similar explosion was reported in the city of Chimoio (previously named Vila Pery); it is widely known that imperialism stepped up its actions against Mocambique at the time of Frelimo's third congress; the (Scala) explosion took place after celebrations of nationalisations' day."

Indeed, July 25 marked the third anniversary of Machel's sweeping nationalisation of land and property and the abolition of private practice of medicine, teaching and law. Frelimo believes two lessons may be drawn from the events: "First, the enemy is stepping up its actions against Mocambique and they are becoming ever more direct; second, these actions must be countered through popular vigilance."

So, it announced: "We are organising vigilante groups at all levels and their action is not abstract but practical and concrete." Driving the point home, Frelimo stressed "the need for organised vigilance has been clearly demonstrated. Let us rise to the challenge".

The bomb blast was a sad event for Frelimo. Machel's regime was forced to admit that there is a strong underground resistance movement and that it has the means to strike "spectacular" blows in the capital and in Chi-



Maputo: near the scene of the bomb blast



Machel: stability image destroyed

moio, 1 200km away.

But armed resistance against the Marxist regime was not the only problem Frelimo was facing last week. More than 2 000km to the north of Maputo, the provincial government of Nampula was busy with yet another major purge of the civil service. An official inquiry in the district of Erati resulted in a guilty verdict against district commissioner Zacarias Cossa and the summary dismissal of five of his subordinates.

The list of charges made impressive reading: "stagnation of the communal village drive; blocking and collapse of the party and state structures; disregard for party directives; favouritism and nepotism; embezzlement of state funds".

To Mocambique watchers, the Nampula inquiry came as no surprise. In the last three years, since the installation of the Marxist-Leninist dictatorship of the proletariat, the civil service has been under constant harassment. The witch-hunt was triggered by Machel himself when he accused the black bureaucrats of "elitism" and likened them to small crocodiles "to be killed on the river banks before they are strong enough to swim to midstream".

Just as overwhelming opposition to the Marxist regime sweeps throughout the country, the United Nations sent yet another mission to Mocambique to have a fresh look at the economic and financial situation. Their findings show a steady deterioration since UN experts visited the country last year. Faced with an estimated \$200 million deficit, Frelimo urgently needs some \$50 million to tidy things up temporarily. It also needs close to half a million tons of foodstuffs to see it through to the end of next year.