

S African forensic expert says Machel died instantaneously (Text) Pretoria, 30th October: President Samora Machel of Mozambique died "instantaneously" from multiple skull fractures and chest and abdomen injuries, according to a professor of forensic medicine who conducted the autopsies of those killed in the air disaster on South African territory on 19th October. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Pik Botha, today responded to press reports quoting allegations by local residents near the site of the crash that President Machel was alive four hours after the aircraft hit the ground and disintegrated, and said he had consulted the expert, Prof J.P. Nel, Professor of Forensic Medicine at the University of Natal. Prof Nel had conducted the autopsy of the dead passengers from the aircraft in Maputo in the presence of forensic experts from Mozambique.

"Prof Nel confirms that President Machel died instantaneously from multiple fractures of the skull and injuries of the chest and abdomen. These injuries were of such a nature that it is impossible for President Machel to have been alive for any period of time following the crash", Mr Botha said. Earlier reports, the day after the accident, said officials at the crash site had only been able to identify President Machel's body by his uniform and gold teeth. (SAPA in English 1551 gmt 30 Oct 86)