



A RECONSTRUCTION of part of the cockpit — the battered instruments bearing witness to the crash that killed

President Machel — faced the packed courtroom when the Johannesburg inquiry began on January 20.

New Machel crash facts support 'beacon' theory

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MOZAMBIQUE has delivered documentation containing two important pieces of information to the Soviet and South African sides of the international commission of inquiry into the causes of the plane crash inside South Africa that killed President Samora Machel and 34 other passengers on October 19 last year.

One of these is a computerised calculation of the flight path followed by the presidential Tupolev. The other is the decoding of the flight data recorder ("black box") of the Boeing 737 of LAM (Mozambique Airlines) that was flying from Beira to Maputo and, 35 minutes after the crash of the presidential plane, was over the Limpopo Valley.

An official source said on Wednesday that Mozambique handed over this information in the spirit of annex 13 of the regulations of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

He said that South Africa has not always respected the spirit of the investigation. In the hearing under Judge Margo in Johannesburg, the South Africans presented data resulting from experiments made with a flight simulator. This data was

not made available to Mozambique before the hearing.

The information on the Boeing showed this plane's flight path. It had left Beira for Maputo and in the Limpopo region received instructions from the Maputo air traffic control tower to return to Beira, due to the fact that the presidential plane had not arrived in the capital.

The information on the route showed that the plane was flying with only one degree of deviation from the pre-established Beira-Maputo flight path, in a straight line.

In the Johannesburg hearing it seems that this fact was used by the lawyer Mr Cedric Puckrin to argue that there was no decoy VOR (Very High Frequency Omnidirectional Radio) in the region.

But if Mr Puckrin was referring to the Boeing 737, a Mozambican civil aviation expert said, then his conclusion was false, because the automatic pilot of the LAM Boeing was following a predetermined path. The automatic pilot was not following any VOR.

As for the computerised plotting of the Tupolev's flight path, this indicates precisely the possibility of the existence of a decoy VOR, the aviation expert said.

Moreover, the Tupolev 134's flight path showed it was flying deeper into South Africa and not towards Swaziland.

"The flight path chart shows the plane turning on to a course which would have taken it eventually to high mountains in South Africa's Natal province," the expert said.

"Only a more powerful radio beacon transmitting on the same frequency as Maputo Airport could have diverted the plane," he added.

South Africa denies involvement in the crash. Experts told the South African inquiry they had ruled out sabotage and said the Soviet crew had made several mistakes in the last minutes before the crash.

As reported briefly in yesterday's Herald, Cde Nikolai Vasin, Soviet Deputy Minister of Civil Aviation, has said the disaster that happened to the airliner carrying Cde Machel was engineered.

Cde Vasin said that in keeping with the norms and regulations of the ICAO, an international commission, consisting of representatives of South Africa, Mozambique and the Soviet Union, was set up to investigate the causes of the disaster. By January 16 of his year, the commission had studied all aspects of the crash.

But South African representatives, in violation of the earlier obligations and the ICAO requests, refused to sign the final protocol with its conclusions on January 16.

Cde Vasin said the joint investigation results indicate that the airliner and all its systems were in good shape throughout the flight. — Ziana-ALM-
Reuter-APN.