

Soviets Deny RSA Findings on Machel Plane Crash
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[Text] The Soviet commission of inquiry into last October's plane crash in which Mozambican President Samora Machel died has published a denial of the South African claim that gave the Soviet flight crew the responsibility for the disaster. President Machel's Soviet-built Tupolev-134 crashed at Mbuzini in the eastern Transvaal on the night of 19 October when returning from a summit in Zambia. Last Thursday, the South African board of inquiry under Judge Cecil Margo published its conclusions, which placed the blame for the crash on the Soviet crew. The Soviet commission notes that in the past the South Africans had suggested as causes of the crash: sabotage on board the plane, drunkenness among the crew, and fault in the aircraft itself. The Soviet document points out that these causes were disproved by the specialists in the tripartite commission, and thus the South African authorities were obliged to abandon them. The tripartite commission consists of Mozambican, Soviet, and South African aviation experts. It was set up immediately after the crash and produced a factual report on the disaster which was published in January.

The Soviet commission dismisses the Margo report as another political maneuver designed to fool the international public opinion and to hide a lack of desire to find the truth. The investigations made by the Soviet commission showed that the plane had been diverted by a (?fake) radio beacon placed somewhere in mountainous region west of Maputo. This conclusion, the Soviet document says, has been handed over to the South Africans in accordance with the procedure established by the International Civil Aviation Organization. The Soviet commission stresses that the report presented by South Africa cannot be accepted as an objective document investigating the causes of the air disaster.