

City Press COMMENT

NO matter how much the South African government tries to open all avenues for an independent inquiry into the crash which claimed the life of Samora Machel, the finger of accusation remains pointed at Pretoria.

Although very tragic, it is something that should cause Pretoria concern.

Because it says something very important – and that is that the government's credibility is so low that nobody wants to believe it.

And for this, Pretoria alone must take the blame. It has an appalling record of telling lies that the world simply will not forget.

It lied about the incursion into Luanda in 1975. It lied about some of the people killed in the SADF raid on Botswana not so long ago – accusing them of being top ANC operatives when they were not. The same thing happened in Lesotho.

And the unfortunate result of all these lies is that they have undermined Pretoria's ability to convince a sceptical international community that it had nothing to do with the death of President Machel. Its only hope lies in the outcome of the results of the investigation by – hopefully – a top group of aviation experts.

Let's hope Pretoria has learnt valuable lessons about the need for integrity in its dealings with neighbouring countries.