

Mozambique-S Africa Border Incident on 17th March

(a) Maputo home service in Portuguese (i) 1400 GMT and (ii) 1700 GMT 18 Mar 81

(i) Text of report (ME/6677/ii)

The Mozambican defence and security forces stationed at Ponta do Ouro to the south of Maputo yesterday killed two South African soldiers following the incursion of a force of about 50 South Africans. One of the soldiers killed, a radio operator, was carried away by the enemy attacking group. The other is at Maputo city mortuary; at the time when he was killed, he possessed an FN-7 rifle, magazine, a telescopic sight and a compass. He had no markings (Portuguese: marca) or military rank. A Mozambican soldier was injured in the clash and is now receiving treatment in Maputo.

At eight o'clock yesterday morning the naval forces stationed at Ponta do Ouro detected an infiltration of South African troops at which it alerted our border troops which advanced to the incursion area at the mountain separating Mozambique from South Africa close to Ponta do Ouro town. The clashes took place at 0845 hours. The Mozambican soldier was wounded by two bullets at the very start of the clashes when the enemy force was (?withdrawing).

By mid-morning, the enemy force received a reinforcement company of about 150 men and two armoured cars. On the Mozambican side, they tried to block access to Ponta do Ouro airport and Vila Catembe road but they also were fought off. The clashes ended at 1500 hours with the withdrawal of South African troops.

According to information from border troops, large numbers of South African troops continue to be stationed on the South African side along the border. Taking part in the clashes on the Mozambican side were the naval force, border troops, police and militia.

(ii) Excerpt from report:

[Passage - as above - omitted.]

The invading South African force was largely comprised of blacks commanded by two Boers. There were also white South African elements, as were the radio operator and the other one both killed by the Mozambican forces.

Meanwhile, national and foreign newsmen took photographs of the South African soldier killed yesterday at Ponta do Ouro following an incursion of the apartheid regime forces into Mozambican territory. The dead South African soldier was brought out of the mortuary where photographs were again taken, together with the war material he had when he was killed - an FN rifle [word indistinct], ammunition cartridges [words indistinct], a water (?container), (?two) cups and a [word indistinct] watch, binoculars, a compass and other material. We recall that the other Boer soldier from the South African racist forces killed at Ponta do Ouro was removed to South African territory [word indistinct].

Note: Maputo radio, in the same broadcast (home service in Portuguese at 1700 GMT on 18th March) said: (Excerpts) Defence and security forces and the population which enabled the total neutralization of the Boer aggression have shown a high degree of vigilance, determination and courage [...] The situation at Ponta do Ouro after the clashes has been calm despite a large concentration of forces on the South African side of the border.