

SA to help 2 held in Maputo

Citizen Reporter

THE South African Trade Mission in Maputo will assist the two members of the yacht, Corolita, being held in Maputo to find a lawyer to appeal against their fine of R19 401 for allegedly looting shipwrecks in Mozambique waters.

Mr Allen Ubsdell, owner and skipper of the yacht that has been impounded by Mozambican authorities, and a yacht builder, Mr Neil Harvey, were free to leave after they had paid the fine, but have instead decided to remain in Maputo and appeal against it as soon as possible.

Three other members of the crew were previously given permission by the Maputo authorities to leave Mozambique but decided to stay aboard with Mr Ubsdell and Mr Harvey, who remain under guard aboard the Corolita in Maputo harbour.

Although a bank guaranteed cheque for R19 401 had been deposited at the South African Foreign Affairs Department in Pretoria by Mr Ubsdell's wife, Michelle, it would not be paid to authorities as "paying the sum will amount to admission of guilt", she said.

Mrs Ubsdell said yesterday that she had delivered the cheque to the department within 50 minutes of hearing of the fine on Saturday but had asked them to hold it until a later date.

Mrs Ubsdell said that at first her husband and Mr Harvey were told that all they needed to do was pay the R19 401 fine.

"We thought it was quite a high sum, but that we would pay it so that they could get out of there.

"However, the Mozambican Government then decided that they would impound the yacht and equipment which we

could only get back for a sum of R225 000. It is worth about half-a-million rand.

"We're trying to get hold of lawyers to appeal the fine tomorrow. But everything is going so slowly".