

Costa: Torture allegations vs intelligence value

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TORTURE and murder allegations levelled against defected Mozambique security chief Mr Jorge Costa will have to be weighed against his intelligence value to South Africa before a decision is made on whether he can stay in the country.

Intelligence sources told the Rand Daily Mail at the weekend that the protests flowing in from members of the Portuguese community in South Africa would have to be viewed in the light of results of lengthy debriefings with Mr Costa.

Mr Costa, who as National Director of Security for Mozambique, was third in charge in the Ministry of Security and who had direct dealings with President Samora Machel, worked with the country's most guarded secrets.

He said in a Press interview last week that his work involved intelligence, espionage and counter-espionage and related directly to neighbouring countries such as South Africa.

Lieutenant-General Johan Coetzee told the Rand Daily Mail that protest could be ex-

pected when a communist official defected to a Western country.

"When in the past, politically involved people from communist countries sought political asylum in Western countries such as England or America they experienced similar campaigns of protest.

"Mr Costa occupied a position which invited enemies and these protests come as no surprise to me," General Coetzee said.

But the Opposition spokesman on Internal Affairs Mr Tiaan van der Merwe, said yesterday that if the allegations of torture and other "uncivilised" practices against Mr Costa proved to be true he should not be given asylum in South Africa.

Mr Van der Merwe yesterday called for a thorough investigation of Mr Costa's background.

The allegations were "very disturbing" and if they proved true he was not the type of person wanted in South Africa, he said.

Mr Costa could not be contacted this weekend. Police said he was still "recuperating".