

# GRAVESIDE VOW TO DEFEND MOZAMBIQUE

MAPUTO.

THE ruling Frelimo Party yesterday pledged to intensify military operations against South African-backed MNR bandits and defend "every centimetre" of Mozambique.

In an hour-long eulogy for the first President of independent Mozambique, Cde Samora Machel, at the City Hall where his body has been lying in state for a week, Frelimo politburo member Cde Marcelino dos Santos vowed: "The prolonged aggression against our country has already left deep wounds. We will concentrate on the task of defending our country."

In front of Cde Machel's coffin, draped with the Mozambican flag and placed at the entrance of the city hall, Cde dos Santos vowed to consolidate national unity and independence, as his voice choked with grief.

As Cde dos Santos recounted Cde Machel's role in the struggle for Mozambique's liberation from Portuguese colonialism and his search for peace in Africa, hundreds of women in the crowd broke down in tears while those who fainted were quickly attended to by first aiders.

"You fell at a crucial and difficult moment in our history. We do not have the tranquillity we needed to rebuild our land. We still suffer from hunger . . . the efforts that we undertake to re-launch production are constantly sabotaged by our enemies," said Cde dos Santos.

The 11-year-old Mozambican government, which inherited a poor

economy from the Portuguese, has never had any peace since independence because of anti-government bandits first masterminded by colonial Rhodesia and now fully backed by South Africa.

Cde dos Santos said that although Cde Machel was a former guerrilla commander his main objective was to fight for peace and Mozambique was fighting aggression to defend peace.

"Tireless fighter, you fell in the struggle against apartheid. An immense void has opened around us. Your death fell upon us suddenly, wrapping all Mozambicans in a mantle of sorrow and anguish.

"We swear to consolidate still further our national unity, the weapon and tool of victory. We swear that we shall build the Mozambique of your dreams," he said.