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blames

SA for

exile's

death

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MAPUTO — The banned African National Congress has blamed South Africa for the killing on Tuesday of Professor Ruth First, a leading member.

In a statement released yesterday, the ANC accused South Africa of resorting to naked terrorism in an attempt to destroy the organisation, and vowed to avenge the killing of the anti-apartheid campaigner.

Prof First, 57, a South African exile living in Mozambique, died when a parcel bomb exploded in her office at the Eduardo Mondlane University Centre for African Studies, where she was director of research.

Three people injured in the explosion are still in hospital.

Mr Aquino de Braganca, the centre's director, had received an envelope identical to that sent to Prof First, sources at the centre said yesterday. He opened it without incident only seconds before the explosion in which he was also injured.

Speaking from hospital last night, Mr De Braganca, who was only told of the death of his close friend and colleague yesterday,

described the attack as "an act of terrorism".

"If the South African Government thinks that this sort of terrorism will get rid of opposition to apartheid, then it is very mistaken," he said.

Before the explosion, the two had been chatting casually in Ruth's office. While they were talking, Ruth opened the envelope containing the explosive.

Friends of the exiled South African have received telephone calls from academics in Algeria, France, Portugal and Britain condemning the attack.

The Mozambique news

agency Aim quoted centre sources as saying they believed the bomb arrived last week and was intended for a UN conference on social science then in session.

Prof First was married to Joe Slovo, a hardline Marxist regarded as the ANC's leading ideologist.

Mozambique's National Organisation of Journalists (ONJ) has expressed its "deep shock" at the "savagely murder of our colleague".

The organisation pledged "to remember Ruth by continuing her work," and reiterated their solidarity with the people of South Africa and the ANC. — Sapa-Reuter