

Pilot's brother also defects to SA

THE civilian brother of Lieutenant Adriano Bomba, 23, the Mozambican MiG-17 pilot who defected to South Africa just over a week ago, has also defected.

Mr Boaventura Bomba crossed the border into South Africa via Swaziland with his wife and child 24 hours after Lt Bomba landed at the South African Air Force base at Hoedspruit. Both men have applied for political asylum.

This was revealed yesterday when Lt Bomba gave his first Press interview after his week-long questioning by Air Force intelligence.

Forty military and foreign correspondents were flown to Hoedspruit base in the Eastern Transvaal yesterday to interview the Black fighter pilot who defected on July 8.

Brigadier A J S Van der Lith, chief of Air Staff Intelligence, chaired the conference, and there were several representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information, led by Mr J J Venter.

The good-looking young offi-

cal asylum.

He denied that there was any collusion between him and his brother and said he did not know his brother had decided to defect until he saw him in South Africa.

Although he deftly answered questions about his brother's defection, saying his brother had only decided to defect because he was concerned about him.

He said that both he and his brother had asked for asylum, but he did not know what had happened to his brother since their meeting because his brother was being dealt with by civilian authorities and he by military ones.

Lt Bomba did not believe that his father and Zululand-born mother and five sisters still in Mozambique were in any danger from the Frelimo authorities, "because none of them knew of my plans".

He said he had considered defection from Mozambique since May, and had decided to

three MiG-15s.

The Soviets had promised Mozambique more modern weapons soon, he claimed.

"There were 22 Mozambican pilots — but now there are only 21," he said, smiling.

Lt Bomba also revealed that Frelimo had good intelligence about the bases and strength of the SA Air Force, as well as the strength of South Africa's anti-aircraft weapons at various sites.

And if he was worried two Mirages picked him soon after he crossed the

border, he said he was actually relaxed.

"I was happy the Mirages were flying close to me rather than a couple of kilometres behind," he said to laughter.

Lt Bomba said that his decision to defect had taken courage, but he felt that by doing so he would encourage other people to do the same.

He said there was dissatisfaction in the Mozambican Air Force and he felt that now others would have more courage.

"My Air Force colleagues cannot be surprised by my flight because we share the same ideals. I feel that my defection will awaken a similar desire in others."

He revealed that he was keen to have a university education and that he was interested in scientific subjects. (There have been reports from Mozambique that he was a mathematics wizard).

He said he had always wanted to study for a degree. The degree he wanted had to be of scientific value, which would be of benefit to the people of Mozambique. People did not develop intellectually in Mozambique, he said.

He said that if South African granted him political asylum he would like to choose an academic career, but that his heart really lay in being a fighter pilot.

"I would rather return to the military in Mozambique, but only if the Frelimo Government is ousted," he said.

He said that the hopes that independence gave to Mozambique were soon dashed.

"Within two years things were very bad. My hopes were dashed when President Machel told my class their education would in future be combined with the military."

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By DESMOND BLOW
Military Correspondent

cer displayed a wry sense of humour and a deep insight into local and international politics as he answered questions for two hours.

He revealed that he and his brother had both asked for political asylum in South Africa, but that had so far heard nothing from the authorities. His fate will apparently be decided by the Cabinet.

Lt Bomba speaks four languages — Portuguese, A.onga (a local dialect in Mozambique), Russian and English, in that order of proficiency.

He answered many questions in English, though most of his replies were in Portuguese.

He said he was surprised to see his brother who had been brought to him 24 hours after his defection.

Lt Bomba said his brother was in Swaziland with his wife and child when he heard of his defection, over the radio. He then crossed the border with his family and asked the South African authorities for politi-

cal asylum. He said that both he and his brother had asked for asylum, but he did not know what had happened to his brother since their meeting because his brother was being dealt with by civilian authorities and he by military ones.

Lt Bomba did not believe that his father and Zululand-born mother and five sisters still in Mozambique were in any danger from the Frelimo authorities, "because none of them knew of my plans". He said he had considered defection from Mozambique since May, and had decided to do so on May 8 because the following day he was being transferred to Beira from where it would have been more difficult.

"I only decided on the date two days before. I had to go on a dummy attack. I went to my target and flew close to my scheduled route until close to the Kruger National Park. Then I went across the border and was soon picked up by two Mirages."

He said that outwardly he had given the appearance of being a good Communist, but that some of his pilot friends knew he was disillusioned with Frelimo.

"In a discussion with some of my officer friends, one of them asked me if I would fire on my former colleagues if I defected to South Africa and flew a Mirage. I had to be truthful and answer 'yes'," he said.

He said that Mozambique had 22 MiG-17s — "there were 23 but now one is here" — and