

**Zimbabwe denies MNR claim to have downed helicopter** (Text of South African agency dispatch) Harare, 22nd October: A Zimbabwean government spokesman today dismissed a claim by the Mozambique National Resistance that it had killed 27 Zimbabwean servicemen and shot down a Zimbabwean helicopter in an ambush. "We have checked with our sources and no such information has come to our attention" said the spokesman. According to the MNR spokesman in Lisbon, the helicopter with a crew of four was shot down on Sunday [19th October] - the same day President Machel's aircraft crashed - while providing "top cover" for a convoy of army trucks in the Gorongosa area, where the rebels formerly had their headquarters. The rebels claimed that the convoy was wrecked, large quantities of ammunition and supplies being captured.

Zimbabwe has recently been asked to send reinforcements to help the Mozambican government repulse a renewed offensive by the rebels. A force of more than 5,000 Zimbabwean troops is deployed in Mozambique's central provinces guarding strategic routes to the sea. Earlier this year when Zimbabwe lost a DC-3 transport aircraft and two helicopters on operations in Mozambique, the crashes were announced after a delay for relatives to be informed. (SAPA in English 2036 gmt 22 Oct 86)