

Who killed Machel?

FRESH suggestions that four prominent Cradock leaders, Matthew Goniwe, Sparrow Mkhonto, Fort Calata and Sicele Mhlawuli were assassinated on instructions from the South African State Security Council, have rekindled suspicions that Mozambican president, Samora Machel's plane was brought down on orders from the same structure.

And contrary to suggestions that the inquiry into the October 19, 1986 crash had been concluded, NEW NATION has ascertained, with the co-operation with Mozambican authorities, that "in as far as Mozambique and the then Soviet Union are concerned, the inquiry has not been finalised."

The inquiry was left at the stage where the members of the board had established that there was a beacon in and around the scene of the crash.

The Mozambicans and the Soviets reportedly wanted the investigations to carry on to establish which beacon this was and who had placed it. But the South Africans declared the inquiry "finished and closed", leaving the Mozambicans with no option but to decline to sign it.

Confusing

The report, which is in itself confusing, makes three contrary suggestions. It first suggests that "the air accident of the TU-134A aircraft was a consequence of a premeditated action of an effective radiotechnical ground device of omnidirectional action, situated beyond the limits of Maputo airport which led to the deviation of the aircraft from the set flight course to its collision with ground in a hilly region on the territory of South Africa."

The report also suggests that the same signal of



SAMORA MACHEL . . . died when the TU-134A aircraft carrying him and senior aides back to Maputo crashed near the South African border in mysterious circumstances. Was the plane brought down on the instructions of the State Security Council?

a false VOR beacon was received by the board equipment on another Boeing 737 aircraft of the LAM (Mozambican Airlines).

But it then argues that the rumours of a false

beacon are untrue, yet it concludes by saying that "the existence of a false beacon would not have been directly related to the cause of the accident".

However, there is more than the false beacon to link the South African security establishment to the incident.

A defector from the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo) reportedly told Mozambican authorities that, while he was the rebels' chief representative in Lisbon, Portugal, he was instructed by a South African security official to prepare a statement claiming that they (the rebels) had shot down the aircraft.

Instructions

These instructions had been given by the South African security official before the aircraft crashed.

However, when the aircraft crashed on South African soil, the same official telephoned Renamo to tell them not to issue the statement any more.

Sergio Vieira, the then security minister, said when he met with South African foreign affairs minister, Pik Botha, in Mbuzini, and then flew back to Maputo to deliver the corpses, there was an undertaking to meet a few hours later to discuss other matters related to the crash.

But as Vieira was preparing to fly back from Maputo, he was made aware that Botha had held a press conference in Pretoria where he had said that the pilot of the aircraft was drunk.

"I was terrified by this and I had to cancel my second trip to Mbuzini. Later in the evening I phoned him (Botha) and all he could tell me was that he had to call the press conference because he was irritated by reports that South Africa was responsible for the crash," said Vieira.