

# Maputo sources give details of ANC raid

By J H P SEHFONTEIN

army vehicles captured in Angola and similar to those used by Frelimo, and accompanied by Portuguese-speaking Black and White soldiers, they passed the Boane Camp 30km outside Maputo.

The South African force tried to persuade the ANC members in the Sactu house to come out. Portuguese-speaking soldiers tried to give them the impression that they were members of

the Frelimo army. But, although some came out, two ANC guards were suspicious and remained inside. They opened fire and the South Africans attacked.

Several of the 12 ANC members were killed and the body of one of the two South Africans killed was left behind, and later discovered at the back of the house.

The Sactu house was the least damaged of the three houses as no cannon or heavy mortars were used during its attack.

Because of this, Mozambican sources are convinced that the original purpose of the attack on the Sactu centre was not to kill, but to capture prisoners and documents. They point to the care taken to get people to come out of the house, and claim the South Africans failed in their original purpose as they were forced to open fire.

It is also said that the South Africans failed to capture the bulk of Sactu's files, as they

were covered by a wall that collapsed during the attack.

Mozambicans are convinced that Slovo was a main target of the South African raid and that they hoped he would be at the Sactu house.

Sources say the circumstances surrounding the killing of 50-year-old Jose Ramos substantiate this theory.

They argue that Mr Ramos, a White engineer, looked like Slovo, who has a round chubby face. The only discrepancy is that Ramos was bald while Slovo is not.

Mr Ramos was the only civilian killed in the attack. He was driving from Maputo in a four-wheel drive vehicle, and the first road block allowed him to pass but apparently alerted the second at the Matola turnoffs. They opened fire on the vehicle, killing Mr Ramos. The vehicle and the driver were riddled with more than 50 bullets.

Mr Ramos was an engineer working for the Maputo city council's electricity engineering department. The words "Electricity Department" appear on the doors of the jeep.

Once the attempt to capture those at the Sactu house failed, the two other South African groups opened fire at random on the other two houses. The houses were severely damaged by heavy weapons.

All three houses are standing empty at the moment.

It seems the SA forces had total control of the three areas they attacked, and the main road. They cut the telephone lines, and after the shooting, which only lasted some 10 minutes, they remained for another 90 minutes looking for material.

During this time they apparently operated on several seriously wounded South Africans.

Helicopters later flew in to meet the returning forces halfway to the border.

It is claimed that to avoid pursuit the South Africans went back on the railway line, using it for two-thirds of the journey, before switching back to the main road. This contradicts claims that they used a road, which apparently does not exist, next to the railway line.

An amazing aspect of the raid is the lack of response and counter-attack by police or the Mozambican army. The house at Matola north is apparently less than 1km from a police station.

The police heard the shooting but did not investigate until more than a hour later.

It seems impossible that the army headquarters in Maputo — or the Moamba camp — did not hear the shooting.

The Mozambican government apparently believes that

the South Africans or the resistance movement had managed to bribe a number of soldiers and officers in Maputo and on the border.

I was told that Mozambican security had discovered a spy ring operating inside the Frelimo army and in other departments some weeks before the raid. It was claimed that these Mozambicans were selling information to certain Western countries, and possibly to South Africa.

Some Mozambicans were already under observation before the attack and it was therefore possible to make arrests soon after the raid, I was told.

It has been impossible to contact any SACP and ANC members in Maputo since the attack. The leaders have all moved to new residences which are without telephones and constantly guarded.

This is apparently not the first South African attack on ANC bases and individuals. A few years ago an ANC centre at Namaacha, a small town close to the Swaziland border, was mysteriously hit by a bomb explosion. At the time the ANC ignored Frelimo warnings that it might be unsafe to be housed close to the Swaziland border.

And almost two years ago a time-bomb was discovered in the boot of Ruth First's car.

● In Pretoria a Defence Force spokesman said he would not comment on the raid details "for security reasons".

He said there some inaccuracies in the report as far as the Defence Force was concerned, but refused to say what they were.