

This week we also had the curious case of the disappearance of Lt. Adriano Bomba, the Soviet-trained Mozambican pilot who defected to South Africa last year.

In response to reports that he had joined the Mozambique Resistance Movement, the SADF issued a statement saying that Lt Bomba had left them in April and that "we have no idea where he is now".

Presumably the SADF knew in April where Lt Bomba was going. Political refugees of dusky hue with past Soviet connections and without passports or pass books do not wander about South Africa as they please. Neither, hopefully, do they just walk out of whatever Air Force base they might be in and disappear without trace.

What is more, why did the SADF wait until early September to reveal the departure of Lt Bomba? Several requests were made between April and September for permission to interview the former Mig pilot but not a word was let out until this week about him having "left".

The SADF will have to do a lot better than this to counteract allegations that South Africa is assisting clandestinely in the "destabilising" of neighbouring countries.

And something will have to be done very soon to placate a justifiably worried community about the allegations of political involvement by the SADF, whether "authorised" or "unauthorised".

Politics: Van Hunkes

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