

Just poaching?

When Mozambican coastguards arrested a South African fishing vessel, the *Plumstead*, inside Mozambican territorial waters, it was close to the island of Inhaca, just across the bay from Maputo. It was registered in Durban and was the property of a company called B.H. Prigge.

The log made the *Plumstead's* route quite clear. Captain Jan Smit and his 18-man crew had made straight for the Monte Belo fishing grounds near the mouth of the Limpopo River, well inside Mozambican waters. It was apparently a very simple case of poaching; the case was heard late last year and the captain was fined \$27,000 (which will presumably be paid by the boat-owners). The *Plumstead* itself was confiscated.

But one intriguing detail raises awkward questions. There were only 30 kilos of fish on board the ship

So maybe the *Plumstead* was not fishing, after all.

In recent months the Mozambican authorities have insistently claimed that the rebels of the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) are being supplied by South Africa not only by air, but also by sea. Submarines have been spotted off the Mozambican coast occasionally — but fishing boats are much cheaper and much less suspect ●

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