

Bomba

now

top

rebel

leader

— Malan

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by Johann Potgieter

CAPE TOWN — The Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, has told Parliament that Lieutenant Adriano Bomba — now reputedly a top anti-Frelimo guerrilla leader — worked for the South African Defence Force as an "intelligence officer" until April last year.

The general gave this information — denied outright by a Defence Force spokesman recently — in reply to a question from Mr Tian van der Merwe of the Progressive Federal Party.

The renewed interest in Lt Bomba, who defected to South Africa with a MiG-15 aircraft in 1981, follows reports in the Nationalist Press that he has now been elected to the executive of the Mozambican National Resistance Movement (MNRM), which wages war against Mr Samora Machel's Government in Mozambique.

Last month the man who allegedly led the MNRM in recent years, Orlando Christina, was shot dead near Pretoria, and the Government has declined to answer supplementary questions about the incident, on the grounds that confidential information has been given to the opposition leaders.

The South African Government has strenuously denied that it is associated with the MNRM, or it engages in "destabilisation" against its neighbours.

Last week the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr Piet Badenhorst, told Parliament his department issued a temporary residence permit to Lt Bomba on November 5, 1981, authorising him to "take up employment with the SADF".

Yesterday a little more emerged about the defector's stay in South Africa.

General Malan said Lt Bomba commenced duty with the SADF on September 1, 1981 — more than two months, therefore, before the authorising permit was issued — as an intelligence officer.

Eight months later, on April 30, 1982, the General said, Lt Bomba's employment was terminated "because of his voluntary resignation".

He said the lieutenant was not at present employed by the SADF, and in reply to a further question whether he was now in South Africa, the General said: "No."

All that is further known at this stage about Lt Bomba's subsequent career, is — as Mr Badenhorst disclosed last week — that the November 5 permit was valid until May last year, and that it was later extended to February this year.

He could thus legally have remained in the country until February.

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