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MR POWELL

c Sir Robert Armstrong


Prime Minister
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South African Raid on Maputo

Early on 29 May South African Defence Force (SADF) commandos raided four houses in the Polana area of Central Maputo, which contains official and diplomatic premises and the Presidential residence. Three Mozambique civilians were killed (the former Mozambique Ambassador to Portugal, his wife and a nightwatchman). The raiders arrived in three cars and appear to have been taken from Maputo beach by boat after the raid. The target of the raid seems to have been ANC premises, but on current evidence there were no ANC casualties.

2. An SADF raid against ANC targets at this time is not unexpected. It follows a raid on Livingstone in Zambia on 25 April and houses occupied by ANC personnel in Harare on 11 and 18 May. However, Mozambique seemed the least likely country for such a raid, since Chissano has reaffirmed his commitment to the Nkomati Accord and, as the South Africans know, has made positive efforts to reduce the ANC presence in Mozambique. Continued Mozambican accusations of South African culpability for Machel's air crash and the current hawkish mood in Pretoria may have overcome any South African reservations.

3. As in previous raids, the South Africans have declined to comment on "unsubstantiated allegations".


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