

# Mozambique: Samora Machel's Heroism. His Legacy Will Live

President Cyril Ramaphosa joined Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi to mark the 35th anniversary of the death of Mozambique's first president Samora Machel

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*South Africa's **President Cyril Ramaphosa** joined Mozambican **President Filipe Nyusi** to mark the 35th anniversary of the death of Mozambique's first president **Samora Machel**, both vowing to go after Islamist insurgents wreaking havoc in the north of the country.*

On October 19, 1986, a Tupolev airplane carrying Machel crashed into mountains in South Africa near the border with Mozambique, killing 35 people. Machel's crash remains a mystery, but speculation has lingered that it was linked to tensions between Mozambique and the then-apartheid regime in South Africa.

Samora Machel, the founding father of the Mozambican State, became one of the most charismatic leaders in Africa and the world, as result of his ceaseless struggle against every form of oppression, discrimination and exploration. His values have influenced many African leaders.

They both revisited the sight of the plane crash that killed Machel while flying home from a conference in Zambia. Ramaphosa paid tribute to Machel for his contribution to the fight against colonial and apartheid rule in southern Africa, urging the region to "continue with the struggle" for freedoms.

"It is for this reason that the peoples of southern Africa... have all decided, collectively, to act in solidarity to help the people of Mozambique to push out and to fight the insurgents who are spreading conflict, insecurity and violence. I have one message for those insurgents. We will come after you," warned Ramaphosa.

Mozambique's President, Filipe Nyusi, said that the legacy of Samora Machel - the country's first head of state following independence from Portugal - is frequently threatened by insurgent attacks in the north of the country, but that the response from southern Africa has been promising.

Nyusi referred to the wave of violence in Cabo Delgado province of the past four years. Since July Mozambique government forces have had military support from Rwanda and from members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

**Graça Machel**, the wife of the Samora Machel and herself a prominent activist, said in her own address that Mozambique's first president had been "assassinated" to silence an outstanding voice in the region. That tragedy remains a mystery, believes Graça Machel, and further recalled that her husband gave support to the struggles of the Zimbabwean and South African peoples to overthrow white supremacist rule.

**Samora Machel Júnior** says there doesn't seem to be any urgency in explaining the disaster that killed his father. Relatives of the 35 victims of the disaster in Mbuzini have asked presidents Nyusi and Ramaphosa to reopen the inquiry.

While acknowledging the complexity of the case, Machel Júnior said that clarification could bring some peace to the family, even after 35 years. "We know this is not a simple process. We realize that it takes some time, but we need to bring some peace of mind to the family. We want to straighten this out and move on," he said.

South Africans vividly remember the tremendous contribution of Samora Machel and the people of Mozambique in the struggle to ensure our freedom in the fight against the system of racial segregation known as apartheid. The 35th anniversary of Machel's death was therefore part of a series of government initiatives that aim to redress and change the heritage landscape to authentically, convey South Africa's liberation history since colonial times.

Mozambique first president died on 19 October 1986 when the Soviet-made Tupolev plane crashed at night in South African territory, in the mountainous area of Lebombo, near the Mozambican border. A flight engineer and nine passengers – out of a total 44 people on board – survived in the crash, which prompted accusations of sabotage against South Africa's then government. However, a 1994 enquiry into the crash carried out by South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) came to no clear conclusion with regard to the causes.

The first Mozambican president died on October 19, 1986, was returning from a regional conference with African leaders in Lusaka, Zambia, when a Tupolev plane crashed in South Africa's mountainous Lebombo area, near the border with Mozambique.

Samora Machel and another 25 Mozambican members of his escort (26 persons), along with fellow party members, ministers, dignitaries, officials, two ambassadors, four members of the Soviet crew and two Cuban doctors died. As a result, a total of 34 people died in the crash of the TU 134. There survived nine Mozambicans and the Soviet board engineer, thus 10 persons. A total of 44 people were in the plane on this flight. One of the survivors died in January 1987 as a result of the crash: Eusébio Guido Martinho. This increased the number of deaths to 35.

The accident sparked allegations of sabotage against the then South African apartheid administration. An inquiry initiated by the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1994 was inconclusive as to its causes. The accident sparked allegations of sabotage against the then South African 'apartheid' administration. An inquiry initiated by the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1994 was inconclusive as to its

causes.

**Accident victims (archives document):**

- Luís Maria de Alcântara Santos- Minister of Transport and Communications;
- José Carlos Lobo - Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs;
- Aquino de Bragança - Director of the Center for African Studies;
- Fernando Honwana - Special Assistant to His Excellency, the President of the Republic;
- Alberto Cangela de Mendonça - Head of the National Protocol;
- Muradali Mamadhusen- Private Secretary to His Excellency, the President of the Republic;
- João Tomás Navesse - Deputy Director of the Directorate of Legal and Consular Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ivete Amós - Secretary of His Excellency, the President of the Republic;
- Osvaldo de Sousa - English interpreter of the President;
- Bernardino Chiche - French interpreter
- Gulamo Khan - Press Attaché at the Presidency of the Republic;
- Azarias Inguane - Photographer of Jornal Notícias;
- Fernando Nhanquila - Flight Engineer;
- Daniel Maquinasse - President's private photographer
- Capitão Parente Manjate - member of staff of the Presidency;
- Nacir Charamadame -member of staff of the Presidency;
- Adão Gore Nhoca - member of staff of the Presidency
- Eduardo Viegas- member of staff of the Presidency;
- Albino Falteira - member of staff of the Presidency;
- Alberto Chauque - member of staff of the Presidency;
- José Quivanane - member of staff of the Presidency.
- Orlando Garrine - Flight attendant;
- Esmeralda Luísa - Flight attendant;
- Sofia Arone - Flight Attendant;
- Ilda Carão - Flight Attendant;

The following international collaborators also perished in Mbuzini:

- Henriques Bettencourt - Doctor of His Excellency, the President of the Republic;
- Ulisses La Rosa Mesa - Personal Doctor of His Excellency, the President of the Republic;
- Iuri Novdran - Aircraft Commander;
- Igor Kartmychev- Flight Engineer;
- Amatoli Choulipov - Flight Engineer;
- Cox. C. Sikumba - Ambassador of the Republic of Zambia
- Tokwalu Batale - Ambassador of the Republic of Zaire

The following members of the presidential delegation survived the tragic event:

Eusébio Guido Martinho (later deceased- on January 1987- as a result of the crash); Captain Carlos Jambo; Captain Carlos Rendição; Fernando Manuel João; Almeida Pedro; Manuel Jairosse; Daniel Cuna; Jossefa Machango; Vasco Langa; Vladimir Novoselov - Flight Engineer.

With an approximate population of 30 million, Mozambique is endowed with rich and

extensive natural resources but remains one of the poorest and most underdeveloped countries in the world. It is one of the 16 countries, with a collective responsibility to promote socio-economic and political and security cooperation, within the [Southern African Development Community \(SADC\)](#) created in 1980.

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***Kester Kenn Klomegah***, who worked previously with Inter Press Service (IPS), is now a frequent and passionate contributor to Global Research. As a versatile researcher, he believes that everyone deserves equal access to quality and trustworthy media reports.

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