

WFO ONLY

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CFACR



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Samora Moisés MACHEL
(Phonetic: maSHEL)

MOZAMBIQUE

President (since June 1975)

Addressed as: Mr. President



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Samora Machel, President since independence, publicly describes himself as a Marxist-Leninist. [redacted] his political and economic decisions are often pragmatic and nonideological. He has served as president of the ruling Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) since May 1970 and theoretically shares power with the other members of the FRELIMO hierarchy. In fact, he dominates the regime and relinquishes only as much power as he chooses, report US diplomats. [redacted] his authority is unchallenged and that he is widely viewed as the symbol of national unity. [redacted]

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Machel is enormously popular in Mozambique, despite a widespread insurgency, a poor economy, and the so far disappointing results of the 1984 nonaggression pact (the Nkomati Accord) with South Africa. He has been careful not to alienate the military (his most important constituency) and has endeavored to build a consensus for his foreign policy initiatives within the FRELIMO hierarchy in an effort to isolate the hardline ideologues in the regime. In the past few years he has sought to improve his ties to the West, particularly to the United States, while simultaneously attempting not to antagonize the Soviets, from whom he receives extensive military aid. [redacted] he wants the United States to continue to play an active role in the region and that he deeply appreciates US humanitarian aid and would like to receive US military assistance. [redacted]

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Early Life and Career

After attending a mission school in Mozambique in the late 1950s, Machel worked in a hospital and took nursing classes at night. He joined FRELIMO in 1963 and subsequently received nine months of guerrilla training in Algeria. He then went to Tanzania to train 250 guerrillas, whom he later led in the initial attack against the Portuguese colonial government in his homeland in 1964. The following year Machel assumed the task of supervising the FRELIMO training camp at Kongwa, Tanzania, and by 1966 he had become chief of guerrilla operations—a post he held until the end of the war in 1974. He did not participate directly in the transition government that oversaw Portuguese withdrawal from Mozambique (September 1974-June 1975). Instead, from FRELIMO headquarters in Tanzania, he laid the plans for his country's first independent government and returned to Mozambique only the day before his inauguration as President. Currently, in addition to his other duties, he is Commander in Chief of the Mozambican Armed Forces. He holds the military rank of marshal. [redacted]

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Personal Data

[redacted] Energetic, flamboyant, and charismatic, he is an outstanding orator and a witty conversationalist. An adept statesman and politician, he is able to calmly discuss ideological and practical

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differences and has shown considerable pragmatism and flexibility in dealing with international issues.

[Redacted] he is also a good listener and is usually courteous and patient in hearing out others.

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[Redacted] In 1977 he traveled to New York and met President Jimmy Carter at the 32nd Session of the UN General Assembly. He has made several visits to China and the Soviet Union and held talks with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in March.

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[Redacted] has had eight children by four women—his deceased first wife, two common-law wives, and his current wife. Two of his children are by his current wife, Graça, who serves as Minister of Education and Culture. Three of his children visited the United States in July of this year. Machel, who will be 52 on 29 September, is a physical fitness enthusiast and likes to jog, do calisthenics, and watch boxing. He speaks Swahili, Portuguese, several tribal languages, and some English, French, Chinese, and Russian. He is a member of the Shangan ethnic group.

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9 September 1985

[Redacted]

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