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SADC leaders mourn great British writer

08:51, August 25, 2007

Southern African leaders and veteran nationalists on Friday paid tribute to the late journalist and publisher David Martin, who died in Harare on August 18 at the age of 71 after a long battle with cancer, New Ziana reported on Friday.

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Various Heads of State and former presidents narrated in condolence messages at the burial of Martin how they worked closely with him during and after the independence struggles.

A prolific writer, Martin worked closely with nationalist movements in Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe and gained the trust of the leadership during and after independence.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, in a condolence message, described the death of Martin as a loss to the country and the region, terming Martin as a "rare type of journalist who connected with the liberation struggle in the region."

In recognition of his works that included various publications he wrote on Zimbabwe's history, the government granted him a state assisted funeral.

Former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, described Martin as a "household name" among journalists and politicians during the 10 years he lived in Tanzania in the 1960s when he worked as a journalist at the Tanganyika Standard newspaper.

"He gave and took the challenge, traded questions and criticism with other journalists, myself included," Mkapa said in a condolence message.

Mozambican President Armando Guebuza described Martin as a great friend, saying "his tremendous contribution to the region will also be remembered."

The Zambian Ambassador to Zimbabwe Sheila Siwela, who was present at the burial said "David left a permanent foot print in our region and his death will be remembered in SADC."

Martin and his wife, Phyllis, co-owned the regional information resource center, Southern African Research and Documentation Centre established 20 years ago under the patronage of the late Julius Nyerere. It has offices in Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

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