

SA man jailed for unpaid hotel bill

A South African man has spent three months locked up in a police station in neighbouring Mozambique over an unpaid hotel bill, Pretoria's foreign ministry said.

"He has been in detention for three months now," said ministry spokesman Nelson Kgwete.

"He visited Mozambique some time ago and when he left the hotel where he was staying and allegedly didn't pay the bill. So the hotel reported him to the police in Mozambique and he was apprehended and detained."

The family of Albert Smith, 40, has asked for help to settle the bill of around 18,000 meticals (US\$611) and an additional fine.

"We're still in the process of facilitating the release of the man but we cannot ourselves as government pay the bill," said Ngwete.

"All we can do is to facilitate with his family so that they contact the relevant authorities in Mozambique and make the necessary arrangements."

The man has not been charged and is being held at a police station and not in a prison, he said.

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge