

# Speedy UFO makes Zimbabwe Air Force look slow

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**HARARE** — Aeronautical experts in Zimbabwe are still puzzled about the unidentified flying object (UFO) which streaked away from two air force jet interceptors over Matabeleland.

The commander of the

Air Force of Zimbabwe (AFZ), Air Marshal Azim Daudpota, told newspapers: "This was no ordinary UFO. Scores of people saw it. Even the pilots of the two fighter aircraft had visual contact with it."

The incident began when the object — de-

scribed as very bright, with a rounded shape and a cone stretching above it — was tracked by visual sightings from Beitbridge and across southern Zimbabwe.

It was then seen clearly from the control tower at Bulawayo airport and tracked on the airport's

meteorology radar.

Two Hawk fighters were scrambled from the Midlands fighter base at Thornhill and were directed to the object, which was then hovering about 2 300 m above Bulawayo. As the fighters closed on the shape, it accelerated upwards at

"tremendous speed", said Air Commodore Dave Thorne of the AFZ headquarters in Harare.

The Hawks levelled out at about 10 000 m but the UFO did not stop its flat-out climb until about 23 000 m, according to Air Commodore Thorne.

The spectacular rise of

the UFO over Bulawayo, in which it went from 2 300 m to 23 000 m in less than a minute, meant it must have been travelling at more than 2 300 km/h — around twice the speed of sound at those altitudes.

When the two fighters returned to Thornhill, the

object was again seen above the base and was witnessed by two other pilots and several officers and men. It then flew east at a high speed.

Air Commodore Thorne said the UFO definitely could not have been a weather balloon.