

SA recalls UN peacekeepers accused of sexual misconduct in Congo

The South African National Defence Force has recalled eight UN peacekeepers deployed to the Democratic Republic of Congo following allegations of sexual misconduct against them, it said on Sunday.



Source: www.unsplash.com

The soldiers were part of the UN peace-keeping mission in eastern Congo, known as MONUSCO, and sources first told Reuters about the alleged abuses last week.

Proper procedures

In a statement released on Sunday, the SANDF said it was "unfortunate" that South Africa first learned about the allegations in the media, and that proper reporting procedures were not followed.

"Due to the serious nature of the allegations, the SANDF took a decision to recall the implicated soldiers back to South Africa to answer to the allegations and to give account of events that transpired on Sunday, 01 October 2023 in Beni," the statement read.



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Katja Hamilton 25 Aug 2023



The SANDF said it had also sent national investigating officers to the deployment area to conduct a full investigation, and would respond when that process had concluded.

Power

A UN source told *Reuters* the allegations involved brothels that were set up near the camps of the South African contingent.

Under the current system, the UN can investigate crimes and send peacekeepers home, but has no power to prosecute.

The UN peacekeeping mission in Congo, which was initially established during a civil war that lasted from 1998-2003, has some 17,000 personnel deployed in the east of the country where various militias and rebel groups continue to fight.

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