

Uncertainty over Zuma jet deal

The department of defence declined to comment on Friday on reports that it was finalising the purchase of a luxury VIP jet for President Jacob Zuma. However, there are suggestions that no such deal is on the cards.



(Image: GCIS)

"The [defence] minister [Nosiviwe Mapisa-Naekula] will engage the media on the projects and programmes [of the SA Defence Force] in a week's time, after a briefing on these," said defence communication head Siphiwe Dlamini.

He declined to comment further.

According to media reports, the jet would cost US\$150m (about R1.26bn) and an extra US80m (about R672.5m) to reconfigure.

Also included in the deal was a Global Express 600 costing US28m (R235m) for the deputy president, bringing the total bill for VIP transport to US258m (about R2.17bn).

Presidential spokesman Mac Maharaj referred queries about the reported deal to the defence department.

The saga has provoked an outcry from the Democratic Alliance, which says spending R2bn on an aircraft is wrong, given South Africa's levels of poverty.

"Before you make assumptions, first verify [with the department]. You are assuming they're spending it... There was no such deal on the table," said Maharaj.

He said there was no provision on the budget for such expenditure.

He then declined to comment further.

It is understood that while the defence ministry might have looked at providing a VIP jet for Zuma, no commitment has been made, nor is likely be made to actually purchase one.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge

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