

SA deploys SANDF to Central African Republic

President Jacob Zuma has authorised the deployment of 400 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) personnel to the Central African Republic (CAR), his office said on Sunday.



The deployment of the personnel to the civil war torn country is part of South Africa's efforts to bring about peace and stability in the region.

The deployment period will be from 2 January to 31 March.

"The employed members of the SANDF will assist with capacity building of the CAR Defence Force and will also assist CAR with the planning and implementation of the disarmament, demobilisation and re integration processes," said the Presidency.

The situation is tense in CAR as the Seleka rebels, who accused President Francois Bozize of reneging on the 2008 peace deal and cracking down on dissidents, launched an armed campaign on December 10 and have taken 10 northern and central towns in their advances.

The 2008 Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed by the government and the three main rebel groups and helped bring an end to conflicts inside the country.

The South African government has urged armed groups in CAR to immediately cease hostilities, withdraw from captured cities and cease any further advances towards the city of Bangui.

As a member of the African Union, South Africa said it rejected any attempt to seize power by force, and therefore supported sanctions and other measures against the perpetrators of any unconstitutional change of government and their total isolation.

"We call on all parties to seek a peaceful solution by engaging constructively in political dialogue. We welcomed the reaffirmation by CAR President Francois Bozize to work towards a negotiated solution to the current crisis in his country."

As the situation worsened in the CAR, Zuma earlier this year dispatched Defense and Military Veterans Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula to the CAR to assess the situation there.

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