

Troops in CAR would cost SA R1,2bn

Having South African troops in the war-torn Central African Republic (CAR) could cost taxpayers more than R1.2bn over five years, President Jacob Zuma said on Monday (11 February).



In a letter to National Assembly speaker Max Sisulu, Zuma clarified that his initial estimate of R65m for the deployment of 400 SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members was only for the period between January and March.

"No provision has been made yet for the financial year for this deployment," said Zuma.

His letter followed criticism by Democratic Alliance MP David Maynier, who questioned the amount the president had said would be spent on the deployment.

Zuma said that while no budgetary allocation had been made, the deployment of troops would run to 31 March 2018, in terms of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between South Africa and the CAR.

"This will remain until the end of the duration of our MOU, however if the situation improves in the intervening period, we will revise the protection element accordingly," Zuma said.

He said the Treasury was being consulted on the additional funds needed for the deployment.

"The department of defence estimates that approximately R21m per month would be required," he said.

Maynier welcomed Zuma's clarification.

"He [Zuma] has effectively conceded that a mistake was made in estimating the cost of the deployment," said Maynier.

He said he would write to the Joint Standing Committee on Defence to have a special hearing on the deployment.

"We have to get to the bottom of why we are planning to sink R21m a month - or R1.26bn over five years - into the CAR," said Maynier.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>