

# DRC rebel group sought training in SA

The 19 alleged Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) rebels arrested in South Africa were to get training to oust President Joseph Kabila's government, the prosecution said on Wednesday (6 February).

It said there was no indication at this stage that the group had any links to the M23 rebels who have been fighting the DRC government.

"The grouping's objective was to receive specialised military related training to overthrow the current DRC government," National Prosecution Authority spokesman Makhosini Nkosi said in a statement.

An elite police unit made the arrests in a dawn raid Tuesday (5 February) at their base in a remote northern area of the South Africa.

Nkosi told *AFP* the group will appear in court on Thursday (7 February) on charges of breaching South Africa's foreign military assistance laws and will be extradited after the trial.

Further arrests are likely, but no South African nationals are thought to be involved.

Opponents of Kabila's government last month targeted the country's delegation at the Africa Cup of Nations in South Africa.

Pretending to be soldiers, they beat up a Congolese member of parliament, a delegation member told *AFP*.

The delegation avoided the country's first match against Ghana on 24 January but attended the second game on 28 January with a South African police escort.

Leaders of former DRC dictator Mobutu Sese Seko's army fled to South Africa after their defeat against Laurent Desire Kabila's rebel forces in 1997.

Kabila became president after the overthrow, and was succeeded by his son Joseph Kabila after his assassination in 2001.

DRC government spokesman Lambert Mende said Kinshasa was in contact with the authorities in South Africa to determine whether the suspects would be tried in the DRC or in South Africa.

He said that at this stage, his government could not say whether the suspected rebels belonged to M23, which launched a war against government forces in May in the volatile eastern Kivu region.

Peace talks with M23 are ongoing.

Around 300,000 Congolese immigrants live in South Africa.

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge

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