

DRC gets 1,300 SA troops

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Tight security has been thrown around the deployment of more than 1,000 heavily armed South African troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo.



In the past 72 hours, 1,300 soldiers from 6 SA Infantry Battalion, including paratroops, special forces and engineers, have left for the eastern DRC as part of a UN peace enforcement mission.

The troops are part of a brigade deployed to target the M23 rebels waging war on the DRC government.

Defence Ministry spokesman Siphiwe Dlamini dismissed the issue of troop movements as "speculative" and refused to comment further.

But defence analyst Helmoed Heitman said: "There has been a lot of activity [at the weekend]. Not only at Bloemspuit, in the Free State, where the troops are deploying from, but also in Pretoria, where Waterkloof air force base has been a hive of activity.

"After the Central African Republic situation, South Africa is taking this far more seriously than the UN. There is a big concern that the UN sees this as a peacekeeping, and not a peace enforcement, mission," Heitman said.

Source: The Times via I-Net Bridge