



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

PO Box 15 Cape Town 8000 Republic of South Africa

e-mail: chrishatt@da.org.za

www.parliament.gov.za

www.da.org.za

CHRIS HATTINGH, MP

DA SPOKESPERSON ON DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS

27 January 2025

Hon. A. T. Didiza
Speaker of the National Assembly

CC: Mr M. Xaso
Secretary to the National Assembly

Dear Madam Speaker,

REQUEST FOR DEBATE OF URGENT MATTER OF NATIONAL PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

1. On Saturday, 25 January 2025, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) confirmed that nine (9) more South African soldiers were killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) during engagements with the “M23” rebel group.
2. These men and women, deployed by the President as part of peacekeeping efforts in the DRC, served bravely and under extremely dangerous circumstances, exacerbated by the SANDF’s woeful lack of operational preparedness in undertaking this mission. The lack of adequate support being given to the SANDF contingent in the DRC has reached a crisis point, thus undermining mission success.
3. Both the President and the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans (Minister of Defence) have been warned, time and again, that the state of the SANDF made any deployment in the DRC reckless and irresponsible. The Democratic Alliance has repeatedly pointed out that the SANDF’s operational capabilities are woefully lacking and that a mission in the DRC was ill-advised.
4. All indications are that the security situation in the region is worsening, and that fighting in the region will soon escalate drastically, placing South African soldiers in even greater harm. Matters have degenerated to such an extent, that an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council was called last night.
5. It has been reported that SANDF troops are standing directly in the way of an imminent assault by rebel troops in the east of the DRC. Some countries are calling their citizens to leave the main urban centre, and the United Nations will reportedly be relocating its staff to safer havens.

6. In short, South African soldiers are in mortal danger. Unprepared, ill-equipped, and under-resourced, they face the very real risk of further, avoidable, losses of life. Without access to basic air support, appropriate combat equipment, and adequate supplies, they are being set up for failure.
7. The ongoing deployment of South African troops in the DRC – a national competency under the President and the Minister of Defence – must now be urgently reconsidered.
8. Accordingly, I would request that you schedule, without delay and at the earliest opportunity, and in terms of Rule 130 of the Rules of the National Assembly, a debate of urgent public importance, on whether the SANDF should continue to be deployed in the DRC in light of current developments. This matter has now become extremely urgent, and with South African lives at stake, cannot be left for a moment longer.
9. If our troops in the DRC are to be called home, it must happen as soon as possible, before another South African loses their lives in a battle that they were not equipped for.
10. I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Hattingh, MP
Spokesperson on Defence and Military Veterans
Democratic Alliance