

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**1246. Mr C D Matsepe (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

In view of reports that the United Nations via the Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is considering to withdraw the Rooivalk helicopters due to the high costs to the United Nations, what are the (a) detailed costs of the Rooivalk Helicopter Unit in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (b) relevant details of the prices and/or costs that have been charged to the United Nations for refunds, (c) costs of the comparative Ukrainian MI-24 with which the United Nations wants to replace the Rooivalk helicopter and (d) associated risks to South African soldiers which form part of the Force Intervention Brigade soldiers if the Rooivalk helicopters are replaced by MI-24 helicopters? NW1345E

**REPLY:**

1. Total cost of Rooivalk Helicopter unit in the Democratic Republic of Congo for financial year 2017/18 is: R122 316 383.04

 Flying Cost per year = **R104 927 400**

 Rockets for training per year = **R8 165 783.04**

 Fuel cost per year = **R9 223 200.00**

 **Total Cost R122 316 383.04**

1. The details of statements forwarded to the United Nations for reimbursement for the Rooivalk Helicopter Unit are:

Letter of Assist 2013-076 (from 01 November 2013 to 30 October 2014)

 Flying Hours: **R128, 746,200.00**

 Ammunition: **R11, 360,283.55**

Paint (White): **R965, 412.00**

 **Total: R141, 071,895.55**

Letter of Assist 2014-062 (from 31 October 2014 to 30 October 2016)

 Flying Hours: **R296, 415,360.00**

 Ammunition: **R130, 942,961.20**

 **Total: R427, 358,321.20**

1. The agreement between the United Nations and Ukraine to employ the MI-24 helicopter is a legal agreement and a third party such as the Republic of South Africa is not privy to the contents of the costs contained in the agreement.
2. The Rooivalk helicopters are a resource that is dedicated for employment by the Force Intervention Brigade. Should the helicopter be withdrawn, the ability to employ Combat Air Support will no longer be directly available to South African Forces. The Rooivalk helicopter is armoured and can withstand light weapons fire and is utilised to gather intelligence by making use of its sensors. The helicopter is able to interdict targets with a high rate of fire in dense jungle terrain that ground forces are unable to reach.

The Rooivalk helicopter is a force multiplier to the Force Intervention Brigade and the risks associated are: reduced intelligence gathering capability, reduced fire power and the absence of an air interdiction capability will seriously reduce the combat potential of South African Forces to stabilise conflict affected areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Should the helicopter be withdrawn, the Force Intervention Brigade’s morale and confidence will be impacted on negatively.