

MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

INTERNAL QUESTIONS PAPER NO 18

QUESTION NO: 1890

DATE: 19 MAY 2023

**REPLY RECOMMENDED BY:
MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS**

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER No.18

QUESTION NO 1890

Inkosi R.N. Cebekhulu (IFP) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:

- (1) Whether, with reference to the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) having sent a delegation to Russia, led by Chief of the South African Army (C Army), Lieutenant General Lawrence Mbatha, to discuss issues relating to military cooperation and interaction, the visit is contrary to our non-alignment position on the war in Ukraine; if not, what is the position in this regard;
- (2) Whether this can be regarded as the most vulnerable time to be sending a military delegation to Russia after the United States has raised concerns over our flip-flopping in the matter; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) Whether her department is in constant consultation with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation and Ministry of Finance to ensure that the Republic can weather the storms should sanctions be imposed as a result of the visit to Russia by the SANDF delegation; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

REPLY:

1. The Chief of the South African Army visited the Russian Land Force Commander at the invitation of the host as part of the Bilateral Agreement between the Republic of South Africa (RSA) and the Russian Federation. The purpose of the visit was to foster and maintain military to military relations, exchange of information and to enhance the existing military cooperation in areas of mutual interests and benefits, such as education and training, professional staff exchanges and participation in Joint and Multi-National Exercises. The visit was also intended to strengthen the existing military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the RSA.

2. The timing of the visit is not related to the ongoing Regional conflict in Europe, but part of solidifying the existing Security and Defence relationships with global partners and this visit was preceded by similar trips to India and Sweden. Russia has been hosting the annual International Army Games over the years, of which the SANDF (SA Army) consistently participate as part of military cooperation.



(T.R. MODISE)

MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: MP

DATE: