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South Africa Arrests 4 Suspected of Wanting To Fight for Russia

By AFP

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O.R. Tambo International Airport **Ad Meskens / Wikimedia Commons**

South African police have arrested four Russia-bound men at Johannesburg's airport suspected of having signed up to fight for the Russian army, the force said on Saturday.

The announcement comes in the wake of revelations that police were investigating a daughter of ex-president Jacob Zuma over claims she was involved in recruiting men to join Russian mercenaries in the Ukraine war.

The four, arrested at O.R. Tambo International Airport on Thursday and Friday following a tip-off, were to be brought before a court near Johannesburg on Monday.

Police suspect them of having breached South Africa's law against citizens fighting for a foreign country's army without the government's authorization.

"A preliminary investigation revealed that a South African female had allegedly been

facilitating the travel and recruitment of these individuals into the Russian Federation military," said a statement from the elite HAWKS police unit, which is in charge of the investigation.

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Police last week said they were probing allegations that Zuma's daughter Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla, an MP in her father's Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) party, had lured 17 South African men to Russia "to fight in the Ukrainian war without their knowledge or consent."

Zuma-Sambudla resigned from parliament after the claims came to light.

According to Kyiv, 1,426 citizens from 36 African countries have joined the Russian army, though the true number of foreign fighters could be much higher.

Besides the men at the front line, several investigations by international media have found that African women have been offered contracts to work in Russian factories making drones, notably in the republic of Tatarstan in Russia's Volga region.

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