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Russia Agreed to Stop Recruiting Kenyan Citizens to Fight in Ukraine, FM Says

By AFP

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Kenyan Foreign Minister Musalia Mudavadi and Sergei Lavrov. **Sergei Fadeichev / TASS**

Russia has agreed to stop recruiting Kenyan citizens to fight with its army in Ukraine, Kenya's foreign minister said Monday after talks with his Russian counterpart in Moscow.

More than 1,780 citizens from 36 African countries are believed to be fighting alongside Russia, Ukraine estimated last month.

Kenya's intelligence services estimate that more than 1,000 Kenyans have been sent to fight, according to a report seen by AFP.

"We have now agreed that Kenyans shall not be enlisted," Kenyan Foreign Minister Musalia Mudavadi told reporters, sitting alongside Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

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Since ordering troops into Ukraine in 2022, Russia has been widely accused of recruiting people from other nationalities to fight alongside its army.

Some have joined voluntarily, lured by high salaries and sign-up bonuses, while others say they were told they were being recruited for regular jobs in Russia.

Lavrov did not mention the agreement in his remarks to the media but said the Russian Defense Ministry was looking into cases that had caused "concern among our Kenyan friends."

"Russia is not forcing anyone to enlist. Just as in the case of participation in the special military operation, volunteers join this operation in full compliance with Russian law," Lavrov said.

Kenyan long-distance runner Evans Kibet, who was captured by Ukraine and held as a prisoner of war, told AFP in an interview from the facility where he was held that he had been tricked into signing an army contract after going to Russia for a sporting event.

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