

1600 Soldiers Demobilised

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Duha, Dec 26, 2007 (The New Times/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) on Sunday demobilised up to 1645 Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF) soldiers.

Military Spokesman Maj. Jill Rutaremara said that the discharge of those soldiers from the military was done in the spirit of attaining a more effective and manageable personnel strength.

The ceremony, attended by Chief of Staff (Land forces), Lt Gen Charles Kayonga, took place at Duha Demobilisation Centre in the Eastern Province.

Among the demobilised were the aged, physically handicapped and those with little output.

"There was also a group of others who had requested to be retired from the service after presenting various reasons that we found tangible," Rutaremara said.

He added: "It is also in an effort to continue building a more professional army that is more equipped."

Fifty-one officers, the most high-ranking of them being at the rank of Major, were among those released from military service.

Sunday's demobilised group puts the total of ex-servicemen to 21, 684 soldiers discharged from RDF in the second phase, which started in 2002.

The first phase started in 1997 and specifically targeted former child soldiers who were part of the then Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) and others who were seen fit to be demobilised.

According to Rutaremara, by 1998, all former child soldiers had been demobilised and reintegrated into society.