



# the sandf

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Department:  
Defence  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Date: **20 July 2017**

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Subject: **THE CHIEF OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE VISITS CUBA TO STRENGTHEN MILITARY RELATIONS**

The Chief of the South African National Defence Force, General Solly Shoke recently went on an official visit to Havana, Cuba. The aim of the visit was, amongst other activities scheduled, to attend three (03) graduation ceremonies involving a total of thirty three (33) South African National Defence Force (SANDF) members studying in Cuba. The graduation ceremonies were held at three (03) different institutions in Cuba over the period 22 June 2017 to 01 July 2017 respectively.

The first graduation took place on Thursday, 22 June 2017 at the José Martí Military Technical Institute in the capital Havana where a total of ten (10) SANDF members graduated in Air Traffic Control, Technical Aviation, Technical Armaments and Technical Radios. Captain Mahluli Masinga was awarded with a gold certificate for being the best student.

C SANDF proceeded to attend the second graduation ceremony at the José Maceo Inter-Arms School in Santiago de Cuba on Monday 24 June 2017. A total of ten (10) SANDF officers graduated after completing a three-year specialised technical tank training and tank transporter operations course. Lieutenant Hunadi Tshehlakgolo received a gold certificate for being the best student on her course. Gen Shoke was also given a platform to promote ten (10) SANDF members to the rank of Lieutenant during the awards ceremony.

The Third and final graduation ceremony took place at the General Maximo Gomez Revolutionary Armed Forces Academy on Tuesday, 01 July 2017 where thirteen (13) SANDF officers completed their Studies in Defence and Security Programme (SDSP) and the Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme (JSCSP) respectively. Both these programmes have a duration of a year in which learners are tutored in strategic operations. Seven SANDF members with the ranks of Colonels and Captains (SAN) attended Studies in Defence and Security Programme.

During the graduation Capt. (SAN) Mokgadi Maphoto was awarded with the Distinguished Service Award for being the best student. In the Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme, which was attended by six (06) SANDF officers, Lieutenant Colonel Diamond Mphafudi was awarded with the Distinguished Service Award for being the best South African student.

General Shoke expressed his appreciation to the SANDF members for their respective achievements attained and also thanked the General Maximo Gomez Revolutionary Armed Forces Academy and the Cuban Armed Forces for producing such high caliber officers.

As part of the official visit to Cuba, Gen Shoke paid a courtesy call to the Minister of Defence of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, Army General Leopoldo Cintra Frai where various matters of interest towards the strengthening of military relations between the two Armed Forces were discussed. General Frai expressed his appreciation to Gen Shoke for accepting his invitation to visit Cuba.

**ENDS.**

**Issued by:** Defence Corporate Communication  
**(SANDF HEADQUARTERS)**  
Pretoria

**Enquires:** Brig General Mafi Mgobozi  
**Director Defence Corporate Communication**  
083 410 1126