

Eritrean Flight Ban Forces UN to Evacuate Injured Soldiers by Road

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Three United Nations peacekeepers who were injured in a road accident in the Eritrean-Ethiopian border area had to be evacuated over land in an eight-hour trip "under very precarious conditions" because Eritrea did not respond to a request to lift the ban it has imposed on UN helicopter flights.

"Following the accident, the UN mission requested Eritrean authorities for permission for an aerial medical evacuation on humanitarian grounds," spokesman Stephane Dujarric told the regular noon briefing in New York today. "As of Tuesday morning, there had been no response from the Eritrean authorities."

The group reached Asmara, the Eritrean capital, earlier today and the peacekeepers are being treated at the UN hospital. One of the soldiers suffered head injuries.

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