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RVN DEFENSE MINISTRY CANCELS DEMOBILISATION ORDERS

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[Text] Saigon, Feb 24 (AFP)--The South Vietnamese Defence Ministry has cancelled demobilisation orders under which about 30,000 of the country's 1,100,000-strong armed forces were due to return to civilian life at the end of next month, it was learned here today.

An official source said a decree temporarily suspending the release of members of the armed forces up to the rank of captain was intended to help meet increased military activity by the communist side throughout the country. The decree was signed by South Vietnam's Premier General Tran Thien Khiem who is also minister of defence.

Women soldiers will not be affected by the decree. Conscripts must serve 2 years in the armed forces but noncommissioned officers and officers have to serve longer periods.

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The decree follows a suspension until further orders of demobilisation published on Jan 22 by the General Office of Political Warfare.