

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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From: OpsNewsTicker
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Subject: Another US soldier in Korea under probe for raping underage girl (Yonhap)

SEOUL, Oct. 7 (Yonhap) -- Another U.S. soldier in Korea is under investigation on suspicion of raping an underage South Korean girl, police said Friday, less than two weeks after a similar case enraged locals.

The Seoul Mapo Police Station said they were interrogating the 21-year-old private from a communications brigade of the 8th U.S. Army over allegations that he sexually assaulted the 18-year-old girl in her rented room in Mapo, central Seoul, in the early morning of Sept. 17.

The soldier, only identified as "R," the initial of his surname, allegedly broke into the girl's room while she was sleeping and raped her before running away with her laptop computer, according to police.

The man had taken the girl home early that same morning after they were drinking together overnight with two others, including one fellow soldier, police said. They suspect the soldier then returned to the girl's room to rape her.

The Army private denied the rape accusation under questioning by police Wednesday, although he admitted to stealing her computer, according to the police station. The soldier claimed the sexual intercourse was consensual.

Police officers have requested the national forensic agency conduct DNA testing on a sample provided by the soldier and other samples collected at the crime scene, they said.

The police station plans to send the case to prosecutors after questioning the soldier again on Wednesday. He is currently under the jurisdiction of U.S. Forces Korea (USFK).

The investigation came only several days after a soldier was accused of rape in Dongducheon, north of Seoul, which stirred public outcry against sex crimes committed by U.S. soldiers stationed here.

The 21-year-old U.S. Army private was indicted by prosecutors Thursday on charges of raping a 18-year-old female student in her rented room on Sept. 24 in downtown Dongducheon, which is home to several military camps.

The report prompted the U.S. government to express regret and pledge full cooperation in the investigation.

According to the National Police Agency, a total of 1,455 U.S. soldiers committed crimes between 2007 and June this year, of which 30 were sexual in nature.

Shortly after reports of the latest suspected rape case, USFK announced a one-month curfew on its personnel nationwide starting Friday.

From midnight to 5:00 a.m., all USFK service members will be prohibited from leaving their camps during weekdays while the curfew is effective between 3:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. on weekends, USFK said in a statement.

"Given the incidents that have occurred over the last several months, I'm reinstating the curfew to assess current conditions, mission requirements, and potential force protection concerns," Gen. James D. Thurman, commander of USFK, was quoted as saying in the release.

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