
Large-scale military drills with thousands of troops launched in southern Russia

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Russian military has started massive drills to test troops' combat readiness and cooperation between different branches of military in the south of Russia. The exercise involves over 12,000 servicemen including Navy, Airborne and Aerospace units.

The strategic command-and-staff games codenamed Caucasus2016 kicked off on Monday in the Southern military district and will last until September 10, the Russian Ministry of Defense [announced](#) on Monday.

Strategic command-and-staff exercise [#Caucasus2016](#) started in the south of Russia <https://t.co/T00dElyMkQpic.twitter.com/qS0tVqndzX>
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The main goal is to check and upgrade skills of military commanders “*in planning, preparation and conducting of combat operations*” by various branches of military.

“About 12,500 servicemen as well as aviation, military hardware and warships” are involved in the drills.

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Apart from the command skills, one of the key aims of the drills will be “*testing of new military equipment in field conditions.*”

Territorial defense involving wider usage of “*aviation and maritime forces of the Black Sea Fleet and the Caspian flotilla*” will also be tested in the upcoming days.

In August Moscow invited foreign military attaches to oversee the exercise, according to the deputy Minister of Defense, Anatoly Antonov, as cited by Interfax.

According to the Russian MoD the current drills are the final stage of the range of command-and-staff drills and other military exercises conducted in Russia throughout 2016.

In preparation for September's drills, the Defense Ministry also conducted "12 special exercises" including those checking abilities of the military to supply its units with everything needed.

Earlier in August the Russian president ordered an unannounced check of military units affecting units of the Central, Western and Southern military districts. Units from the Northern fleet as well as Aerospace and Airborne forces also took part in the drills, that started on August 25 and wrapped up a week later.

Currently Russia is also involved in the ongoing military exercises with Mongolia, codenamed Selenga 2016. The goal of the drills taking place in Russia's East is to check the level of readiness of troops from both states and develop their cooperation.
