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Russia Holds Mass Military Drills Across the Country

April 09, 2018

Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

Russian soldiers will put their combat experience in Syria to the test in military exercises held across a vast stretch of central Russia and two Central Asian countries.

Russia has conducted military operations in Syria in support of President Bashar Assad's government since the fall of 2015. General Valery Gerasimov, the head of Russia's General Staff, estimated this year that Russia ran 48,000 service members through the Syrian war theater and tested more than 200 newly adopted or soon-to-be-adopted types of weapons.

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Russia's Defense Ministry said in an online statement Monday that it had launched drills stretching from Siberia to the Urals and the Volga region, as well as in Russian military bases

in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

“Syrian combat experience in the drills will form the basis of large-scale troop inspections in the Central Military District,” the ministry said.

The military district’s commander, Lieutenant General Alexander Lapin, was cited as saying that the Syrian experience will be used “in combat and operational training of the troops and military administration bodies.”

The latest firing exercises come three months after 10,000 Russian soldiers performed anti-terrorist drills in the Central Military District based on their Syrian experience.

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