

Russia Launches Exercises to Test Population's Readiness for 'External Aggression'

October 01, 2018



Emergency Situations Minister Yevgeny Zinichev. Maxim Grigoryev / TASS

Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry has announced the start of three-day civil defense drills across the country to test the population's readiness in the case of external aggression.

As part of the exercises, the ministry tasked civil defense units with ensuring the functionality of the economy and social services in the case of an "escalation of the geopolitical situation." The practice run comes amid strained relations between Russia and the West that have fallen to a post-Cold War low.

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"All commanders are ordered to take comprehensive measures to ensure the readiness of

forces to react," Emergency Situations Minister Yevgeny Zinichev [said](#) in the announcement on Monday.

The ministry tasked regional officials with testing the population's readiness, communication and alert systems, as well as ensuring that public utility infrastructure in northern regions is prepared for the winter heating season.

The first two stages of the drills will be devoted to assessing threats and organizing federal-regional-municipal command structures, according to the drill's plan [cited](#) by Interfax.

The initial stage will also reportedly test the readiness of shelters, evacuation routes and temporary accommodation facilities to ensure that social support systems are provided "in case of external aggression against Russia."

The third stage envisions practical measures or tactical drills in wartime conditions, the news agency says.

The exercises are set to wrap up one day ahead of Russia's Civil Defense Day celebrated on Oct. 4.

Original url:

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