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Norway Worried by Russian Sea, Air Maneuvers

By Reuters

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Defense Ministry

Russia has told Norway its navy and air force will hold exercises near the Nordic nation's Arctic waters later this month, a worrying sign of greater assertiveness by its eastern neighbor, the Norwegian Defense Ministry said on Tuesday.

NATO member Norway and neighboring Russia have both increased their military presence along NATO's northern flank following the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014.

"The anticipated Russian maneuvers follow a pattern in which Russia is operating and conducting military activity more frequently and further to the west," Norway said of the planned exercises off the coast of Nordland and Troms counties.

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"Russia is acting in an increasingly assertive way in our immediate neighborhood. Norway is worried by this and will closely monitor the exercises," the ministry added in a statement.

Russia's Defense Ministry did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

Last year, Russia said a plan to increase the presence of U.S. Marines in Norway was "clearly unfriendly," and also complained over a NATO exercise that sent some 50,000 NATO soldiers to Norway.

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