The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Tanks Move to Afghan Border Ahead of Drills

By AFP

July 20, 2021



Armed forces of Tajikistan on a military parade next to the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border, July 16. **Nakib Murodzoda / TASS**

Russian tanks stationed at Moscow's base in Tajikistan have arrived at training grounds near the border with Afghanistan ahead of army drills next month, the Defense Ministry said Tuesday.

Russia will stage military drills from Aug. 5 to 10 with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan at the Harb-Maidon training ground near the border with Afghanistan where the Taliban has led a lightning offensive against government troops.

"As part of the upcoming joint tactical exercise, Russian tank crews from the 201st military base stationed in Tajikistan have covered the distance of 200 kilometers from the Lyaur range to the Harb-Maidon training ground near the border with Afghanistan," the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Troops from the Russian base in Tajikistan — Russia's largest outside the country's borders — and from the Central Military District will take part in the games.

Related article: Russia to Hold Central Asia Army Drills Near Afghan Border

Alexander Lapin, commander of the Central Military District, has said the troops will run drills to defeat "illegal armed units that invaded the territory of an allied country."

Separately, the Defense Ministry said that around 1,500 troops from Russia and Uzbekistan will take part in a joint army drill in Uzbekistan from July 30 to Aug. 10.

The military exercises will take place at the Termez training ground close to the Afghan border and will involve Russian troops from the Central Military District and aviation.

The troops will practice tasks of ensuring "the territorial integrity of Central Asian states," the Defense Ministry said.

Related article: Russia Says Taliban Controls Two-Thirds of Afghan-Tajik Border

Taliban has capitalized on the withdrawal of foreign troops to launch a series of offensives across the country.

Afghan government troops and refugees have in recent weeks crossed into Tajikistan, fleeing Taliban advances.

Russia has said the United States failed its mission in Afghanistan and blamed the withdrawal of foreign forces for the war-torn country's rapidly deteriorating stability.

The Taliban is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/07/20/russian-tanks-move-to-afghan-border-ahead-of-drills-a74563