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30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Moscow, St. Petersburg Rehearse WWII Parade as Ukraine War Rages

April 29, 2022



A mobile launcher carrying a Yars thermonuclear armed intercontinental ballistic missile on Tverskaya Street after a Victory Day parade rehearsal marking the 77th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. **Valery Sharifulin/TASS**

Moscow and St. Petersburg held nighttime World War II victory parade rehearsals late Thursday as Russian forces continued their push to capture territory in eastern Ukraine.

Russia marks 77 years since the Soviet defeat of Nazi Germany on May 9 with a landmark military parade on Red Square aiming to boost domestic patriotic sentiment and projecting its might abroad.

State media showed videos of military vehicles sweeping through the empty streets of central Moscow.

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In St. Petersburg, where road closures led to traffic, soldiers were seen marching through Palace Square.

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Meanwhile, residents of Moscow's Tverskaya Ulitsa, a key part of the procession, reported being visited by police officers this week and asked whether citizens of Ukraine live in their buildings, according to the independent Mediazona news website.

Elsewhere, authorities in the Belgorod region neighboring Ukraine canceled Immortal Regiment memorial processions in nine border towns over "security concerns." A series of explosions and fires that Moscow blames on Kyiv have rattled the Belgorod region in the weeks since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Russia's Defense Ministry published an interactive map of the parade at midnight Friday, showing 33 marching columns of Russian troops, cadets and members of security agencies.

The mechanized column will include 131 vehicles, among them T-14 Armata tanks, S-400 air defense systems, rocket launches and infantry fighting vehicles.

The parade's air portion will involve 77 aircraft, including Tu-22M3 long-range bombers, Su-57 stealth fighters as well as attack and transport helicopters.

Eight MiG-29SMT fighter jets will fly in the shape of the letter Z "in support of members of the special operation in Ukraine."

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In space, Russian cosmonauts unfuled a replica of the Soviet Banner of Victory during a nearly eight-hour spacewalk outside the International Space Station.

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The rehearsal for the parade began at around 8 p.m. Moscow time and ended shortly before midnight. Two more rehearsals are expected on May 4 and May 7.

With heavily sanctioned Russia facing international isolation over its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, the Kremlin said Friday that no foreign dignitaries have been invited to attend the May 9 parade.

In 2021, President Vladimir Putin was accompanied by Emomali Rahmon, who has ruled over the Central Asian republic of Tajikistan for nearly 30 years.

A number of ex-Soviet Russian allies, including Moldova and Kazakhstan, have banned World War II parades this year. Kyrgyzstan banned the letter Z, which has come to symbolize support for Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine, from being displayed at the

commemorations.

In Ukraine, Russia's initial stated goal to "denazify" its pro-Western neighbor before it shifted its focus toward eastern Ukraine for the second phase of its campaign in late March.

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