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Russia, China, Iran Launch Naval Drills

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Warships attend a joint naval drill of Iran, Russia and China in the Indian Ocean in January 2022 **Zuma / TASS**

Russia, China and Iran launched the active phase of joint naval exercises near the Islamic republic's southernmost city on Thursday, the Russian military has confirmed after the Chinese defense ministry announced the drills.

"Maritime Security Belt 2023" will run from March 15-18 in three stages, including an active phase on March 16-17, in the Gulf of Oman near the Iranian port city of Chabahar.

These are at least the third Russian-Chinese-Iranian naval war games since 2019. Russia and China also carried out joint naval drills with South Africa in February 2023.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it has deployed the Northern Fleet's frigate Admiral Gorshkov with the medium sea tanker Kama, which were involved in the Russian-Chinese-South African drills last month.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army has dispatched its destroyer Nanjing, with Iran sending the frigates Sakhand and Jamaran, as well as the corvette Bayando.

After having completed briefings and tactical trainings on Wednesday, the two-day active phase will involve "forming an inter-ethnic unit of warships" with joint maneuvers, artillery firing exercises and anti-piracy operations.

Russia's Defense Ministry said "Maritime Security Belt 2023" will wrap up on March 18 with an overview of the active phase.

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