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# Russia's Navy Chief Kicks Off Myanmar Naval Drills

By AFP

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Myanmar servicemen saluting Russian Navy personnel ahead of the joint maritime exercises. **Russian Defense Ministry**

The head of Russia's navy met Myanmar's junta chief ahead of joint naval exercises due to begin Tuesday, according to Myanmar state media, the first combined drills by the two countries at loggerheads with the West.

The security exercises involving Russia's Pacific Fleet and Myanmar's navy will continue until November 9 in the Andaman Sea, according to the Global New Light of Myanmar.

Both navies will contribute ships and aircraft to drills simulating the "prevention of air, water surface and underwater dangers and maritime security measures," the newspaper said.

Ahead of the joint exercises, Russian Admiral Nikolai Yevmenov met junta leader Min Aung Hlaing aboard the Russian destroyer Admiral Tributs and briefed him on the ship's

capabilities.

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Moscow is a close ally of the junta, providing arms and diplomatic support as Myanmar's military struggles to crush armed opposition to its rule.

In September Myanmar and Russia were joint chairs of a "counterterrorism" military exercise held in Russia's Far East that brought together several countries from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Since seizing power in February 2021, the junta has imported $406 million in arms and equipment from Russia, the United Nations' Special rapporteur for Myanmar said in May.

Min Aung Hlaing has made several trips to Russia since the coup and met President Vladimir Putin last year.

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