
ARMENIA TO JOIN NATO DRILLS IN GEORGIA

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Armenia has agreed to take part in fresh NATO-led military exercises that will be held in Georgia later this year, Georgian Defense Minister Irakli Gharibashvili said during a visit to Yerevan on Thursday.

I am glad to note that Armenian soldiers will take part in the Noble Partner multinational exercise that will be held by NATO member and partner states in Georgia, Gharibashvili said after talks with his Armenian counterpart Davit Tonoyan.

I hope that in the future the Armenian side will continue to be actively involved in such exercises, he added at a joint news briefing.

According to the Georgian Defense Ministry, the drills will be held near Tbilisi in September. They are aimed at strengthening Georgias defense capability and interoperability with NATO member and partner forces and improving regional partnership, the ministry said in a recent statement.

Georgia -- U.S. armored vehicles take part in the joint multinational military exercise, called 'Noble Partner 2018', at a military base near Tbilisi, August 15, 2018.

The Armenian military last participated in NATO-led exercises in Georgia, also codenamed Noble Partner, in August 2018. It declined invitations to join similar war games that were held in Georgia in September 2018 and in March 2019. Russia, Armenias main military ally, has denounced such drills.

Tonoyan made no mention of Armenian participation in the upcoming exercises in his statement to the press. He stressed instead the importance of a plan of Armenian-Georgian military cooperation for this year signed by the two defense ministers.

Also, agreements were reached on expanding cooperation in a number of other spheres without including that in our bilateral program, Tonoyan said without elaborating.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian reaffirmed his governments commitment to deepening Armenias strategic relationship with Georgia when he met with Gharibashvili later in the day. He said defense and security is one of the important components of bilateral ties.

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