

Russia and Myanmar Conducted Maritime Exercises in Andaman Sea

written by Ezba Walayat | November 13, 2023



The first Myanmar-Russia Maritime Security Exercise (MARUMEX), which comprised ships and planes, took place in waters 85 nautical miles (157 km) west of Myeik from 7-9 November, 2023 in the Andaman Sea. The Andaman Sea is a strategic waterway that connects the Indian Ocean to the Bay of Bengal, and it is important for both trade and security. The focus of the exercises is on defending against threats from air, sea, and land, as well as other maritime security measures. The exercises are a sign of the growing ties between Russia and Myanmar. Russia has become a key ally of Myanmar, providing it with weapons and diplomatic support. Russia is a significant ally and weaponry supplier to Myanmar's military regime, which was established in February 2021 after the army overthrew Aung San Suu Kyi's democratic administration.

Russia is expanding its naval presence in the Andaman Sea, and conducting joint military exercises with Myanmar and other countries in the region. The Andaman Sea is located at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. It is also close to the Strait of Malacca, one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. This makes the Andaman Sea a strategically important location for both trade and military purposes. Moreover, the Andaman Sea is a vital shipping lane for oil, gas, and other goods. Russia is a major exporter of oil and gas, and the Andaman Sea provides a direct route to markets in Asia and the Middle East. The Andaman Sea is a crucial component of Russia's strategy to increase its influence in the Indo-Pacific region. In the upcoming years, Russia's foreign policy is probably going to place a greater emphasis on the Andaman Sea.



In this photo released from the The Military True News Information Team on Nov. 6, 2023, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, center, leader of ruling military council, salute while inspect guard of honor from Russian Navy during opening ceremony of first Myanmar Russia Maritime Security Exercise at Thilawa port in Yangon, Myanmar. (The Military True News Information Team via AP)

The maritime exercises are being considered as an indication of Russia's growing military presence in Asia. Russia has been expanding its naval presence in the region in recent years, and the exercises with Myanmar depicts that Russia is interested in strengthening its ties with different countries in the region. Military-ruled Myanmar relies on Russia for diplomatic support and military assistance. Whereas, Myanmar is a strategically important location in Indo-Pacific region for Russia. Although the military regime in Myanmar remains internationally isolated, relations between two countries will remain close in the future due to their individual and collective interests.