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Russia will respond to NATO's military activities: Top general

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Russia's top general has warned that Moscow will retaliate against NATO's increased military activities near the country's border amid escalating tensions with the Western alliance over the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

General Valery Gerasimov, Russian military's chief of staff, made the comments on Friday during a defense conference in Moscow.

The military chief added that the Western military alliance is boosting its presence in the Baltic states as well as the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions.

"The intensity, the operational and combat readiness of the alliance's troops are being increased near the Russian border," said Gerasimov, adding, "In these circumstances ...we have to take retaliatory measures."

Gerasimov's comments come just days after NATO said it would do whatever it takes to defend its allies in the Baltic region.

On May 6, NATO launched military drills in Estonia with a record breaking number of 6,000 troops from a number of allied countries, including the US, the UK, Latvia and Lithuania.

Britain, France, and the United States have been deploying troops to the Baltic region since April 29.

The US Marines will reportedly remain in Estonia until the end of this year. NATO has also deployed fighter jets and naval vessels to Lithuania and Poland as well as to Romania.

Tensions between Russia and the West heightened after Ukraine's former Black Sea peninsula of Crimea joined the Russian Federation following a referendum on March 16.

The US and the EU accuse Russia of destabilizing Ukraine and have slapped a number of sanctions against Russian and pro-Russia figures.

Russia, however, rejects the accusation, saying the pro-Russia protests in Ukraine began spontaneously against the new interim government in Kiev.