



IAF and Exercise Orion 2023

An Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent departed for France, to participate in Exercise Orion at Mont-de-Marsan, an Air Force base of the French Air and Space Force (FASF) on 10 April 2023. The exercise was conducted from 17 April to 5 May 2023, with the IAF contingent comprising four Rafales, two C-17s, two Il-78 aircraft and 165 air warriors. This was the first overseas exercise for the IAF's Rafale aircraft.

Besides the IAF and the FASF, Air Forces from Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain

and United States of America also flew in for this multilateral exercise. France launched its biggest military exercise in decades, together with its NATO Allies. The second phase of Exercise Orion 23 involves 7,000 personnel and assets from France and several Allied countries, including Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States, and focuses on defensive operations on land, in the air, at sea and in cyberspace.

The drills are conducted over several months, starting in late February and ending

in May 2023. The peak of the exercise is scheduled from late April to early May, in north-eastern France. During this phase, around 12,000 troops will be deployed on the ground and in the skies to repel a simulated high-intensity attack.

As highlighted by the French Chief of Defence Staff (CEMA) in his strategic vision, the changing international context requires France to envisage the nature of future operations in a three-phase continuum of competition-contest-conflict. Exercise Orion 2023 is the first exercise in what French Joint Forces Command

