

Live-fire exercises conducted by PLA base in Djibouti

Tank destroyers from the People's Liberation Army's base in Djibouti participate in a live-fire exercise at a range in the African country's capital on Thursday. [Photo/China Daily]

The Djibouti Logistics Support Base of the People's Liberation Army conducted a live-fire exercise on Thursday with its heavy-duty weapons, according to the Chinese military.

Several wheeled tank destroyers and wheeled infantry fighting vehicles from the base in the Horn of Africa took part in the exercise at a local shooting range and fired dozens of shells, according to a news release published late Friday by the PLA Navy, which administers the logistics support base.

Infantry practiced assault maneuvers with the armored vehicles, it said. It quoted Senior Captain Liang Yang, commander of the base, as saying that the move was intended to verify the combat capability of troops and their weapons and to improve their adaptability in the local environment.

The PLA established its Djibouti Logistics Support Base, the first of its kind for the Chinese military, on July 11 and put it into formal operation on Aug 1.

Located in Djibouti City, the African nation's capital, the base will support the Chinese military's naval escort, peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in Africa and western Asia, the Navy said. It will also help China improve its capabilities in international military cooperation, joint exercises, emergency evacuations and overseas rescue.

It will enable the nation to better guard the safety of international strategic maritime passages with other countries, it said.

President Xi Jinping, also chairman of the Central Military Commission, had a teleconference with troops at the Djibouti base this month during an inspection of the CMC Joint Command Headquarters in Beijing. Xi told them to gain a good reputation for Chinese soldiers and to contribute to regional peace and stability.

On Friday, Premier Li Keqiang met with Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh in Beijing. Calling Djibouti a major partner in East Africa, Li said China is willing to work with the nation to make use of each other's advantages to foster economic cooperation and to build a regional hub of trade and logistics.