

Russia's Lingering Soldier, Gear Problems Mean 2nd Draft Is Coming: ISW

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November 30, 2022

A fractured Russian military continually bombarded by Ukrainian forces is a likely sign of more civilians being recruited to fight in the ongoing conflict, according to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW).

The U.S.-based think tank said in its report released Tuesday that continued Russian struggles with dated equipment and domestic personnel shortages are "indicative of a probable second wave of mobilization."

The prediction referenced a United Kingdom Ministry of Defence (MoD) report from Tuesday stating that Russia has "likely largely stopped" deploying battalion tactical groups (BTGs) the past three months, deemed a shift in traditional Russian military doctrine that supports ISW's prior assessments.

In April, the ISW found Russian BTGs being degraded in multiple Russian attacks, in cities including Kyiv, Mariupol, Severodonetsk and Lysychansk. Restoration of said BTGs "failed."

"Russian forces have likely since thrown their remaining combat power and new personnel, including mobilized personnel, into poorly trained, equipped, and organized ad hoc structures with low morale and discipline," the ISW said. "The structure of BTGs and the way the Russian military formed them by breaking up doctrinal battalions, regiments and brigades likely deprived the Russians of the ability to revert to doctrinal organizations."

It has led to Russian forces relying on what the ISW called "ad-hoc structures with mobilized personnel."

Jordan Cohen, policy analyst at the CATO Institute, told *Newsweek* that as long as Russian President Vladimir Putin can defend his land, fire long-range weapons and have reservists willing to fight for their country, "there is little reason" not to mobilize again.

"Despite Ukraine's recent gains, Russia has been able to destroy substantial amounts of civilian territory, electricity transformers and sewage services, as well as making some advances—even if they are small," Cohen said. "Come winter, it will be more difficult for Ukraine and Russia to

make advances and the fighting likely will become long range and more about inflicting damage than taking territory."

The ISW's foreshadowing of a second mobilization comes about one week after officials from Russia's Republic of Karelia sent Putin a letter urging him to issue a decree prohibiting continued mobilization.

They said it is due to the impact on "the psychological state of society" and being "a source of increased anxiety in Russian families and work collectives ... "

Since the partial Russian mobilization of about 300,000 reservists in September, the results have been deemed ineffective in several ways.

In October, Russian Colonel General Andrey Kartapolov said about 10,000 of them returned home across the country "for various reasons."

This month, the MoD said the mobilized troops sent into battle with little to no training offered "little additional offensive combat capability" to the Russian military.

Ukrainian officials have estimated that Russia's army requires some 5 million troops to come out of the war victorious.