The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Halts Disposal of Old Weapons Amid Ukraine Invasion

March 20, 2023



Servicemen from Central Military District repair units restore equipment damaged on the battlefield in Ukraine. **Stanislav Krasilnikov / TASS**

Russia has halted its disposal of Soviet-era weapons since invading Ukraine last year, The Moscow Times' Russian service reported Monday, citing procurement data.

The report comes amid widespread reports of the Russian army being plagued with equipment shortages throughout the 13 months of its offensive.

Russia had spent 7.7 billion rubles ($100.3 million) on contracts to destroy leftover weapons, including intercontinental missiles, radio-guided missiles, fuel and other equipment, from 2014-22.

January 2022, the last month before the Kremlin launched its invasion of Ukraine, marked the last time that Russia's Defense Ministry signed a contract to dispose of artillery ammunition.

A Russian army contractor on the battlefield told MT's Russian service on condition of

anonymity that mothballed Soviet equipment is making it to the frontlines in large quantities in poor condition due to improper storage.

“That’s why the frontline isn’t moving,” he said.

Russian authorities have not spoken publicly about whether arms disposal deals have been classified since 2022.

Of the 7.7 billion rubles spent over the eight-year period from 2014-22, missile disposal accounted for more than half at 4.3 billion rubles ($56 million) for 74 contracts, according to MT Russia’s analysis of procurement data.

Ammunition came in second at almost 350 million rubles ($4.5 million) for 15 contracts, with tanks and armored vehicles third at more than 230 million rubles ($3 million) for 35 contracts.

The London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) estimated that the Russian Armed Forces had 65% of their 80,000 weapons, including tanks, combat aircraft and artillery systems, in storage at the start of the Ukraine war.

Oryx, a website that tracks destroyed and captured equipment in the war, estimates Russia lost 8,590 armored vehicles in 2022.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/03/20/russia-halts-disposal-of-old-weapons-amid-ukraine-invasion-a80547