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Zelensky Says Russia Plans to Mobilize 300K Troops by June

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Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Wednesday that Russia's military plans to draft some 300,000 new troops over the next two months.

"I can say that Russia is preparing to mobilize an additional 300,000 military personnel by June 1," Zelensky said during a joint press conference with Finnish President Alexander Stubb, according to the news outlet RBC Ukraine.

He did not provide further details about the alleged recruitment campaign or state the source of the information.

Later Wednesday, the Kremlin denied Zelensky's claim.

"This isn't true," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Moscow drafted some 300,000 reservists during a "partial" mobilization drive in September 2022, which saw thousands of men flee Russia to avoid being sent to fight in Ukraine.

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Last month, the investigative news website Vyorstka reported that the Russian military was planning to recruit 300,000 soldiers for a renewed offensive without officially declaring a new mobilization drive.

But a source close to Russia's Defense Ministry told The Moscow Times that the Kremlin remains hesitant about mobilizing large numbers of men over fears of public backlash against such a move.

Zelensky, who in December said that his own country's army wanted to mobilize up to half a million people, told reporters Wednesday that "we don't need half a million."

"As for the specific number of how many will be mobilized, I'm not ready to say yet," he was quoted as saying.

Zelensky on Tuesday signed into law a measure lowering Ukraine's army mobilization age from 27 to 25, a move that comes as Kyiv runs short of soldiers to defend against Russia's invasion.

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