

Russian media largely ignore second anniversary of war - ISW

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Russian officials and state media have largely refrained from publicly discussing the second anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24.

That's according to a report by the U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War ([ISW](#)) think tank, reports Ukrinform.

Analysts refer to the data from the Russian opposition publication Agentstvo Novostei of February 25, which noted that the Russian state-run TV channels Rossiya 1 and Channel One, as well as NTV, owned by Gazprom-media, briefly recalled the two-year anniversary of the 'special military operation'. Agentstvo Novostei noted that the Russian host Mikhail Leontiev, on the air of the Vremya program on Channel One on February 24 noted that the day marked the two-year anniversary of the war, stopping short of making any other comments on the topic.

ISW said it also saw minimal comments by Russian government officials.

"Russian officials and state-run and state-affiliated TV channels likely refrained from commenting on the two-year anniversary of the start of Russia's full-scale invasion to avoid drawing attention to Russia's failures to achieve its stated strategic goals in Ukraine and its more immediate goals of seizing all of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts, while also suffering high personnel losses," analysts wrote.

They also noted a recent public opinion poll in Russia, which showed that public sentiment about the war in Ukraine has not changed much in recent months, and that most of the Russians are apathetic about the war, although most show no support for a second wave of mobilization.

The think tank believes Vladimir Putin and Russian government officials likely refrained from covering the second anniversary of the full-scale aggression in an effort to preserve public apathy, which in part allows the war to continue without significant public backlash.

According to ISW, Putin is likely aware that the second wave of mobilization would be an unpopular step, and is concerned that it would cause widespread discontent.

"Putin may, however, become less concerned about public sentiment after his reelection in March 2024 and determine that Russian force generation requirements outweigh the risks of widespread domestic discontent," ISW concluded.

As Ukrinform reported earlier, Russia's military death toll in Ukraine as of February 26, 2024, has amounted to 410,700 people, as per the General Staff of Ukraine's Armed Forces.

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