



## Russian MoD: 90% of Ukraine's Military Airports Containing Majority of Its Air Force Knocked Out

### Description

UKRAINE/RUSSIA: Russia launched a military operation to demilitarize Ukraine on 24 February after a formal request for assistance from its Donbass allies – who faced weeks of escalating shelling, sniper and sabotage attacks by Ukrainian forces. The operation has including concentrating strikes on Ukraine's military aerodromes to ensure Russian aerial superiority.

90 percent of Ukraine's military aerodromes containing the majority of the country's Air Force have been knocked out of operation, and part of its fleet of aircraft has flown to Romania and is not taking part in any combat, Russian Defence Ministry spokesperson Igor Konashenkov has said.

"At the start of the special operation, the Ukrainian Air Force had as many as 250 serviceable combat aircraft and helicopters. Russia's Aerospace Forces have destroyed 89 combat aircraft and 57 helicopters on the ground and in the air," Konashenkov said in a briefing Wednesday.

Ukraine's Air Force has also nearly completely run out of first and second class military pilots, and is limiting flights to individual attempts to mount missions, according to Konashenkov.

Russia has destroyed 81 radar stations from Ukraine's air defence troops, causing a loss of battlefield control and a dramatic deterioration in the country's air defence capabilities, which have been reduced to only a local capability to resist, the MoD spokesman added.

Russian forces have destroyed a total of 2,786 pieces of Ukrainian military infrastructure since the start of the operation, Konashenkov said. 49 facilities, among them two command and control points, six air defence systems, four caches of ammunition and fuel, and 37 areas of concentration of military equipment were destroyed in the course of operations Wednesday. The MoD spokesman said Ukrainian losses include 953 tanks and other armoured vehicles, 101 rocket artillery systems, 351 pieces of artillery and mortar systems, 718 military vehicles, and 93 drones. He also indicated that 137 Ukrainian S-125, S-300 and Buk-M1 air defence systems had been destroyed, with these losses constituting over 90 percent of Ukraine's air defence systems.

Konashenkov has also reported on NATO's ongoing support for Ukraine, saying the alliance's reconnaissance aircraft are carrying out round-the-clock flights over Polish airspace looking into Ukrainian airspace and passing this information on to the Ukrainian military's leadership.

"The leadership of the Ukrainian Armed Forces is trying to make up for a lack of information about the situation in the skies by obtaining data from a command post in Vinnitsa [west-central Ukraine] from E-3A aircraft from NATO's AWACs system," the officer said.

Commenting on the situation on the ground, Konashenkov said Donetsk People's Republic forces had advanced four km and established control over the settlements of Signalnoye, Taramchuk, Yelenovka and Trudovoe, and that Lugansk People's Republic troops advanced two km, taking control of the settlements of Toshkovka and Grachevo. Russian forces independently established control over the settlements of Krasnaya Polyana and Stepnoe, he said.

by Ilya Tsukanov

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