



Russia's War-Industrial Production Capacity

Ammunition, Missiles, UAVs and
Conflict Sustainability, 2026-2027

DATE

29 October 2026

GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Russian Federation / Ukraine

INTELLIGENCE DOMAIN

Defence Industrial Base / Military Capabilities

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PRODUCT ID

IW-AN-2026-028

Executive Assessment

Russia retains the industrial capacity to sustain a high-volume war effort through 2026, but output is uneven across ammunition families and does not translate directly into combat-ready force regeneration. Expansion is most evident in large-calibre ammunition and one-way attack UAVs, while precision missiles remain more dependent on specialised components, quality control and highly constrained production processes.

- **Ammunition:** a 2026 foreign intelligence assessment estimates that Russian industry delivered approximately **7 million** large-calibre rounds and rockets in 2025, compared with markedly lower pre-war production. This total combines several categories and must not be presented as seven million 152 mm shells.
- **Precision-strike systems:** Ukrainian military intelligence reported in October 2026 production of **more than 200 cruise and ballistic missiles per month**. The figure is useful as an indicative wartime rate, not a verified plant-by-plant audit or proof of simultaneous stock availability.
- **Unmanned systems:** the same Ukrainian reporting estimated **approximately 10,000 attack UAVs per month**. Differences among Geran variants, jet-powered platforms, decoys and other categories prevent an independent conversion into a homogeneous monthly strike capability.
- **External support:** North Korean ammunition and missile transfers and cross-border flows of critical industrial inputs remain important. Estimates use incompatible periods and counting conventions, so they cannot safely be summed.
- **Economic sustainability:** the state continues to prioritise the defence sector despite fiscal pressure. The 2027 defence allocation proposed in September 2026 reached **17.1 trillion roubles**; this is a forward budget plan rather than confirmed expenditure.

Overall judgment. Continued Russian war production during 2027 is **highly likely** if existing fiscal, supply and workforce mechanisms persist. A sudden industrial collapse is less plausible than differentiated stress: sustained mass output accompanied by slower refurbishment, higher costs, local component shortages and declining efficiency in selected high-technology segments. **Confidence: moderate**, reflecting divergent sources and poor visibility of operational stocks.

Scope of the Analysis

This Analysis updates the 14 October 2025 assessment of Russian armaments production and conflict sustainability. It examines industrial throughput in artillery ammunition, precision missiles and attack UAVs; the contribution of armoured-vehicle refurbishment and foreign supplies; critical inputs and export controls; and the fiscal conditions that shape sustainability through 2027. The assessment separates announced targets, estimated completed production, refurbished stocks, effective serviceability and munitions consumed or retained in reserve.

Analytical Focus

The decisive question is not whether individual Russian factories can announce higher output, but whether the defence-industrial system can deliver **usable weapons at a rate sufficient to meet battlefield expenditure, replace losses and rebuild reserves**. The analysis therefore prioritises throughput, system mix, technical quality, imported content, production-to-front timelines and the persistence of the funding and labour base.

1. Industrial Mobilisation: Output versus Capacity

Following the 2022 invasion, Russia expanded shifts, redirected state demand and reopened or upgraded existing manufacturing capacity. Later growth depended increasingly on investment in machinery, subcomponents, energetic materials, labour and transport. The defence industry was not converted into a single uniform production system: artillery ammunition, unmanned platforms, guided weapons and heavy armoured vehicles are supported by different factories and face distinct replacement cycles.

The operational effect should be assessed at four separate levels: **installed capacity, completed output, delivered and serviceable inventory**, and **weapons actually available for employment**. Production figures do not reveal acceptance rates, spare parts, training, missile stocks or the time required to deploy finished equipment. At the same time, battlefield expenditure is not a direct measure of manufacturing throughput, because imports and inherited reserves can provide a buffer.

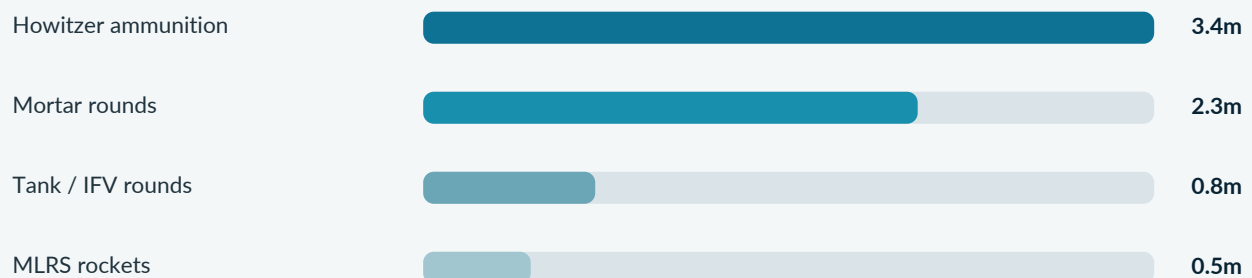
A July 2026 institutional study of Russian defence firms highlighted the different trajectories of established companies producing armoured vehicles, air-defence equipment, electronic warfare and artillery, and newer drone enterprises. This diversification makes an across-the-board production figure analytically weak. Russia is generating volume in selected categories while retaining longer lead times and refurbishment dependence elsewhere.

2. Conventional Ammunition: the Most Measurable Expansion

The strongest comparable external estimate available for 2025 places Russian production of ammunition of 100 mm calibre and above at approximately **7 million units**. The assessment includes howitzer rounds, tank and infantry-fighting-vehicle ammunition, mortar rounds and multiple-launch rocket-system rockets. Its breadth explains why earlier statements about roughly two million artillery shells cannot simply be compared with the seven-million total.

FIGURE 1 | 2025 Russian large-calibre ammunition output

Estimated production mix: 7.0 million units across four categories



Categories include different ammunition types; totals are not all artillery shells.

Within that estimate, conventional howitzer ammunition accounted for approximately **3.4 million** units, mortars **2.3 million**, tank and IFV rounds **0.8 million**, and MLRS rockets **0.5 million**. The same foreign intelligence assessment judged that Russia had increased production by more than seventeenfold since 2021. These are intelligence estimates, not industrial audit returns, and their categories and calibre thresholds matter.

The implication is substantial but not unlimited fire sustainability. A significant part of ammunition demand can be met from Russian output, while external deliveries and remaining reserves improve flexibility. However, storage, propellant quality, transport, barrel wear, local fire-control capacity and engagement tempo still condition the

operational return from each additional round. Furthermore, an increase in aggregate ammunition production does not imply equivalent growth in precision-guided weapons or in a specific 152 mm ammunition family.

Expansion of explosives and propellant supply is relevant to long-term resilience. Russia has worked to substitute domestically sourced feedstocks for some previously imported materials, reducing one class of dependency. The broader chemical and industrial supply chain nevertheless retains specialised input and equipment constraints. The earlier document treated a particular new plant as if its operational contribution were established; the public evidence does not support assigning it a quantified production effect.

3. Precision Missiles: High Value, Limited Transparency

Publicly reported Russian missile production is concentrated on Iskander-family weapons and long-range cruise missiles, alongside smaller or less frequently observed categories. Ukrainian defence-intelligence information released in August and October 2026 describes **more than 200 cruise and ballistic missiles manufactured per month**. For individual categories, its October account indicated Iskander-M production of up to **65 per month**, a Kh-101 target exceeding **80 per month**, and Kalibr production around **29 per month**. These figures should be described as attributed estimates, not independently corroborated monthly factory totals.

Several technical and reporting distinctions are material. First, launch rates, production rates and estimated inventories describe different variables. Second, missile categories may include modified air-defence missiles employed in a surface-to-surface role, altering aggregate comparisons. Third, technological defects, maintenance backlogs and selective deployment of newly manufactured weapons mean a plant output figure is not equivalent to a guaranteed successful strike capability.

High-precision weapons continue to depend on electronics, guidance assemblies, advanced machine tools and quality assurance. The 2025 original report treated production of Iskander, Kh-101, Kalibr and Kinzhal as if a stable aggregate of 195-200 missiles were directly comparable. The new evidence suggests output of broadly that order or higher, but with a changing system mix and unequal evidentiary standards. A precise 2026 production time series across all families is not currently established.



FIGURE 2 | Biysk II - solid-propellant facilities

Archived satellite illustration from September 2024 showing construction at a site associated with rocket-motor production. It does not establish the commissioning status, output or missile types produced in 2026.

Operationally, Russia can alternate mass UAV raids with missile strikes to maintain pressure on Ukrainian air defence. The endurance of this campaign depends not only on monthly output but also on inventories withheld for priority missions, launch-platform serviceability, route preparation, reconnaissance and the availability of military-industrial components.

4. UAV Production: Scale Combined with Rapid Adaptation

Russia has expanded domestic production of Shahed-derived Geran systems and related one-way attack UAVs through a network that includes large-volume assembly and parallel development lines. A detailed September 2026 research assessment documented rapid changes in navigation, communications, propulsion, airframes and electronic-warfare resilience, with successful changes incorporated into serial production after battlefield feedback. Industrial adaptability has become as important as nominal airframe sophistication.



FIGURE 3 | Geran-type UAV assembly

Assembly-hall image illustrating the serial production of Shahed-derived Geran UAV airframes. The photograph is not evidence of the monthly production volume reported for October 2026.

The October 2026 Ukrainian estimate of **roughly 10,000 attack drones per month** indicates scale, but the quantity aggregates platforms with different capabilities. The reported breakdown includes newer jet-powered types, conventional Geran variants and additional categories whose composition is not fully documented. It would be misleading to assume that all 10,000 are identical long-range strike drones or that every completed unit reaches the front and launches successfully within the same month.

The operational advantage is cumulative. Drones can impose repeated air-defence engagements, occupy radar and command channels, and force selective allocation of interceptors while missiles remain available for high-value targets. The technological race is also dynamic: adaptations to electronic warfare, improved Ukrainian interceptor drones and changing interception costs can alter the effectiveness of a fixed production rate. Manufacturing throughput alone therefore cannot describe strategic effect.

5. Heavy Equipment: New Manufacture and Refurbishment

Armoured-vehicle regeneration remains less transparent than ammunition or one-way UAV production. Public IISS assessments of the 2024 period described substantial Russian replacement through refurbishment and reactivation of stored equipment, alongside new manufacture. A reported total combining both streams must not be presented as entirely newly built tanks or infantry fighting vehicles.

The distinction matters for force quality. Older vehicles can regenerate numerical mass more quickly, but their protection, sensors, mobility, maintainability and suitability for contemporary operations differ from those of new-build systems. The availability of recoverable hulls also tends to decline as the most serviceable stocks are selected first. Russia can adjust tactics and employment patterns to limit losses, but this is not proof that industrial regeneration has removed the underlying equipment constraint.

At present, open sources do not provide a sufficiently consistent, current 2026 accounting of new-build versus refurbished tanks, IFVs and self-propelled artillery to justify a single precise annual total. The appropriate indicator is the combination of **new manufacture, refurbishment throughput, verified losses and field serviceability** - not a catalogue of nominal production announcements.

6. External Supplies and Industrial Inputs

North Korea is a material supplier of artillery ammunition, ballistic missiles and certain other weapon systems to Russia. Assessments differ substantially on volumes because some count physical rounds, some convert mixed loads into 152 mm-equivalent shells, and others estimate quantities from containers. A 2026 South Korean defence assessment placed transfers at **more than 15 million rounds in 152 mm equivalents**; an Estonian estimate used **5-7 million rounds** over a different reporting window and category definition for imports from North Korea and Iran combined. These numbers should not be added or treated as a contradiction without reconstructing the denominators.

Iranian assistance and inherited Shahed technology were consequential to Russia's early attack-drone expansion. Domestic iteration has since changed the extent and form of reliance on external designs and components. The more important contemporary issue is the supply of components, engines, electronics and machinery across third-country networks and the degree to which Russian firms can substitute domestic alternatives without impairing output or performance.

Export controls have significantly reduced, but not eliminated, Russian imports of common high-priority goods. A 2026 KSE Institute assessment estimated that reported flows of such items had more than halved in value terms after controls and that **approximately three-quarters** of reported exports to Russia in the category originated from China. Component-level examination also shows that dependence varies by weapon family: some recovered Russian systems contain predominantly Russian- or Belarusian-made low- and medium-complexity electronics, whereas other systems retain significant foreign semiconductor content.

The analytical implication is selective resilience rather than autarky. Russia can simplify designs, change component suppliers and accept performance trade-offs to sustain throughput. More specialised electronics, precision machinery and complex subsystems remain slower to substitute. The effect of sanctions must therefore be evaluated against specific technology families, not inferred automatically from their legal existence.

7. Financing, Energy and Workforce Sustainability

The defence sector remains a fiscal priority. Budget documents reviewed in September 2026 indicated that Russia had originally planned **12.1 trillion roubles** in 2026 national-defence spending, while actual expenditure would remain partly classified and some military costs would be carried elsewhere. The documents projected **17.1 trillion roubles for defence in 2027** and approximately **50 trillion roubles over 2027-2029**. A budget allocation is not a final industrial-output or procurement figure.

Fiscal pressure is nevertheless rising. Authorities revised the projected 2026 federal deficit upward to **3.2% of GDP**, from an initial 1.6%, and increased borrowing requirements. Russian finance data for January-September 2026 indicated federal oil-and-gas revenues of about **5.47 trillion roubles**, a reduction of **17.2% year on year**. This is a measure of fiscal oil-and-gas receipts, not gross energy-export revenue, refinery output or the whole state budget.

The energy constraint is not linear. Russian production and export receipts depend on prices, exchange rates, tax arrangements, discounts, shipping, sanctions, operational disruptions and subsequent repairs. An attack on a refinery may reduce product supply without proportionally reducing crude exports or budget revenue; conversely, stronger energy prices do not guarantee equivalent fiscal improvement. Russia retains mechanisms for domestic financing, taxation and reallocation, albeit at increasing economic and political opportunity cost.

The workforce constraint is similarly uneven. Overtime, recruitment premiums and shifting labour from the civilian sector can maintain priority plants, but skilled technicians, quality inspectors and machine-tool specialists are not interchangeable with general labour. This favours continuity of simpler high-volume products over smooth expansion across every defence-industrial category. A broader economic slowdown may therefore coexist with vigorous output in selected military sectors.

8. Operational Assessment and Outlook, 2027

Most likely course: Russia sustains large-scale production of conventional ammunition and attack UAVs, continues meaningful monthly missile output and uses foreign supplies as a resilience reserve. The force remains able to conduct prolonged attrition and episodic high-density missile/UAV raids. Strategic pressure persists even if individual high-end platforms remain constrained.

More adverse industrial course: fiscal tightening, technology restrictions, quality-control failures or interruptions in specialised inputs cause uneven delays and more expensive substitution. Production does not necessarily collapse; instead, Russia gives priority to high-volume and operationally essential categories, defers less urgent procurement and accepts lower overall efficiency.

Higher-output course: sustained state financing, further industrial investment and stable external inputs enable selective increases in 2027 throughput. Whether this produces a corresponding increase in combat power depends on trained manpower, launch platforms, storage, logistical distribution and the enemy's adaptation. Published production targets alone do not validate this trajectory.

Priority indicators to monitor

- Changes in delivered rather than announced ammunition output, with consistent calibre and category definitions; local evidence of quality-control or logistics stress.
- Missile launch frequency versus attributed monthly production and reported stockpiles; technical defects, system mix and the conversion of manufactured rounds into fielded capability.
- Geran and jet-powered UAV configuration changes, sortie generation, reported reserves and the balance between strike UAVs, decoys and interceptor-resistant variants.
- New-build versus refurbished armoured vehicles, the condition of recoverable storage inventory and the restoration cycle for damaged systems.
- Critical imported components, machine-tool procurement, budget execution, energy taxation and indicators of skilled-labour scarcity.

Final Assessment

Russia has evolved from emergency wartime production measures toward a more institutionalised defence-industrial mobilisation system. Its most convincing achievement is the combination of quantity and adaptation in ammunition and unmanned strike systems. The central uncertainty is not the existence of this productive capacity, but its distribution across weapon classes and the degree to which completed weapons can be sustained in combat.

The evidence available in October 2026 supports a judgment of **continued Russian conflict endurance through 2027**, under growing but manageable economic constraints. The likely result is not industrial failure in a single year but progressive trade-offs among output volume, sophistication, cost, readiness and civilian economic resilience. **Confidence: moderate** for the overall trajectory; **moderate-high** for the 2025 ammunition category breakdown; **moderate-low** for exact October 2026 missile/UAV totals and operational inventories.

Related IW Analysis

Ukraine's Integrated Air Defence System — IW-DS-2026-012 (related IW Dossier).

Keywords: Russian defence industry; ammunition production; Iskander; Kh-101; Kalibr; Geran; North Korea; defence economics; war sustainability.