

# RUSSIA RELATED ANALYTICAL DIGEST ON MARCH 2026

## “SYSTEMIC ECONOMIC STRAIN IN RUSSIA: FALLING EXPORTS, BUDGET DEFICITS, AND INDUSTRIAL WEAKENING”

The world needs a proactive strategy on Russia, taking the initiative by developing and communicating a clear strategic vision for Ukraine, along with a plan to contain and counter Russian influence.

The [NGO ANTS](#) conducts monitoring and research work on the state not only of the Ukrainian economy and society, but of the Russian economy and Russian society as well in order to have a true picture of the situation in this country, and not be satisfied with the bluff, hybrid aggression and disinformation that Vladimir Putin loves so much.

Fortunately, in today's world it is difficult to hide anything, and realistic conclusions can be drawn if information is analyzed in a timely and correct manner, having instant access to the Russian and international information field, and an excellent understanding of the context and social processes.

**The head of our organization, Dr. Hanna Hopko, former head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine,** is making great efforts in the international arena to advocate for the cessation of appeasement of the aggressor, who should not be irrationally feared, because his economy and social processes are far from being in the best shape.



# Mosaic of Russian economic news for March 2026

## Oil and Logistics Under Pressure: Price Shocks, Shrinking Exports, and Weakening Industry

### Oil Price Shock

Russian Urals crude fell \$12 in minutes on 2 March 2026, dropping from ~\$69 to ~\$57. The move reflected extreme volatility in an oversupplied market.

### Oil Production Decline

Russian oil output fell for the third month in a row to 9.18 million barrels per day. Production stayed below OPEC+ quotas.

### Rail Freight Weakens

Russian Railways cargo volumes dropped 3.2% year-on-year in February. Overall freight turnover fell 8.8% over January–February.

### Coal Sector Contraction

Coal production fell 7%, with exports also declining sharply. Western and southern export routes saw the steepest drops.

### Port Traffic Decline

Russian seaports recorded a 4.7% fall in cargo turnover in early 2026. Liquid cargo and industrial goods were the main drivers of decline.

[\*\*Read more\*\*](#)

# Mosaic of socio-political news from Russia in March 2026

## Labor Shortages, Industrial Decline, and Rising State Control Intensify Economic and Political Strain

### Staffing Crisis at the Interior Ministry

The Interior Ministry continues to face major personnel shortages, with over 170,000 vacancies reported in 2025. Some regions report district police staffing gaps of up to 90%.

### Limited Reintegration Risks

Over 8,000 war participants have been convicted of crimes in Russia since 2022. Reports also indicate rising violent offenses among returning veterans.

### Growing Use of Veterans in Civil Roles

Authorities increasingly promote hiring veterans in civilian security roles, including school protection. Regional officials argue they bring combat readiness to public safety.

### Economic Slowdown and Job Cuts

Major companies including RZD, MMK, Yandex divisions, and others announced layoffs amid falling output and weaker demand. Regional governments also began cutting public sector staff.

### Industrial Contraction Accelerates

MMK reported reduced capacity utilization due to sanctions and weak demand in metal-intensive industries. Similar pressure is spreading across manufacturing and logistics sectors.

### Political System Becomes More Controlled

Putin reduced open interaction with big business during the RSPP congress, avoiding the traditional Q&A format. Communication with elites appears increasingly limited.



## **Expansion of State Security Powers**

A reported secret Russian unit (Center 795) was created for overseas operations targeting opposition figures. It reportedly includes personnel from multiple security agencies.

## **Social Control and Regulation Expands**

New draft laws propose banning films that “discredit” Russia or the USSR and increasing penalties for IT-related offenses. Education programs also introduce patriotic ideology from early grades.

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## **ANTS is open to cooperation! The most accurate information on your desk before anyone else!**

NGO National Interests Advocacy Network ANTS is a non-governmental organization, a powerful analytical center working to develop a strategy for countering the threat from Russia and its allies. We are open to proposals for cooperation in this direction for a deeper awareness of our partners and allies about socio-political and economic processes in Russia and Ukraine, and therefore a more profitable strategy for dealing with threats.

We offer operational and high-quality monitoring, analytics, joint events, briefings and discussions.

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