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Kremlin Calls for More 'Substantial' Talks on Ukraine

By AFP

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Russian Armed Forces Buk-M3 SAM system in Ukraine. **Russian Defence Ministry / TASS**

The Kremlin said on Tuesday it would like the ongoing negotiations with Kyiv aimed at ending Russia's military action in Ukraine to have more substance.

"There is some kind of process happening. We would like more active and substantial (talks)," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists.

Russia's position was "well-known to the Ukrainian side" because Moscow handed over its demands in written form "many days ago," Peskov said.

"We would like a more substantial and swift answer," he said.

The two sides are currently holding negotiations remotely after several rounds of talks between delegations meeting on the border between Belarus and Ukraine.

So far, the talks have yielded little progress, with both sides blaming the other, and none have been at the presidential level.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky renewed an offer of direct peace talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin late Monday.

Zelensky told local media that he was ready to meet Putin "in any format" to discuss ending the almost one-month-old war that has shattered several Ukrainian cities.

Zelensky said even the status of Russian-occupied Crimea and Russian-backed statelets in Donbas was up for debate.

Russia has declared Crimea part of Russia and recognized the independence of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic in eastern Ukraine.

All three areas were part of Ukraine following the collapse of the Soviet Union and are at the centre of a decade-old crisis that escalated on Feb. 24.

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