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Russia Rejects Kyiv-Backed Peace Talks in Malta

By AFP

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Russian Foreign Ministry / Facebook

Russia on Thursday criticized Ukrainian-backed peace talks set to be held in Malta this weekend, warning any discussions without its participation would be counterproductive.

The talks, which Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hopes will drum up support for his own peace plan, come after similar gatherings in Jeddah and Copenhagen earlier this year.

"Obviously such gatherings have absolutely no perspective, they are simply counterproductive," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters.

She added the upcoming meeting had "nothing to do with the search for a peaceful resolution" and criticized Malta for hosting what she called a "blatantly anti-Russian event."

The head of Ukraine's presidential office Andriy Yermak said he was optimistic about the

meeting, and that around 60 countries had confirmed their attendance.

"This meeting is a powerful signal that unity is preserved around Ukraine," he said on Ukrainian television.

Zelensky has been promoting his own ten-point peace plan, which calls for Russia to withdraw all its troops from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, including Russian-controlled territories.

Russia — which claimed to annex the four Ukrainian regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia last September — has rejected any settlement that would involve giving up land.

Both Russia and Ukraine are preparing for a grueling winter ahead, with Ukraine warning of renewed strikes on its energy infrastructure and Russia pushing back against Kyiv's counteroffensive.

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