

# Zelensky Says Kyiv Wants 'Enduring' Peace To Protect it From Russia

By [AFP](#)

December 08, 2024



President Zelensky **President of Ukraine official website**

Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky said Sunday he told US President-elect Donald Trump Kyiv needed an "enduring" peace that Russia will not "destroy" in the future, after they met in Paris for talks on the almost three-year war.

Trump had earlier said Zelensky was keen for a "deal" and called for a start of negotiations.

The pair met a day earlier with French leader Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee.

Trump has boasted he could end the conflict swiftly without saying how and both Moscow and Kyiv are readying for his arrival in the White House, with the dragging conflict seeing an escalation in deadly attacks in recent weeks.

"I stated that we need a just and enduring peace – one that the Russians will not be able to destroy in a few years, as they have done repeatedly in the past," Zelensky said on social

media.

Almost three years of war have ravaged Ukraine, leaving thousands dead and millions fleeing the country.

"Ukrainians want peace more than anyone else. Russia brought war to our land, and it is Russia that most seeks to disrupt the possibility of peace," he said.

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He called on Western allies not to "turn a blind eye to occupation" and said Kyiv would only agree to a deal that will bring long-term peace.

"War cannot be endless – only peace must be permanent and reliable," he said.

In a rare admission of numbers, Zelensky said 43,000 Ukrainian troops had been killed in combat, while some 370,000 were wounded.

Both sides are believed to have suffered massive casualties and that figure is believed to be far higher.

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### **'Key conditions' discussed'**

Zelensky gave no concrete details on key aspects of what negotiations could look like, but a senior Ukrainian official said they had discussed "some key conditions" for ending the war.

"We are not disclosing details, but the presidents discussed at the meeting that there should be something that would guarantee the reliability of the peace," the source said.

The Kremlin, meanwhile, accused Ukraine of "refusing" to negotiate an end to the war and said its conditions to enter peace talks – which include Kyiv giving up four regions – remain unchanged.

"The Ukrainian side refused and is refusing negotiation," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

He referred to a 2022 Ukrainian decree that ruled out talks with Putin, but not other Russian officials.

Trump had earlier called for an "immediate ceasefire" and called for talks to begin.

"Too many lives are being so needlessly wasted, too many families destroyed, and if it keeps going, it can turn into something much bigger, and far worse," he wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Trump has touted himself as having good relations with Putin.

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**'How long can we be at war?'**

But as leaders made statements in Kyiv, Moscow and Paris, the situation on the ground in Eastern Ukraine remained dire.

Moscow claimed another village in the east – Blagodatne in the Donetsk region – on Sunday, pressing steady gains.

Many in Ukraine have feared that Trump taking office would force it to make heart-aching concessions to Russia, while the nation is also suffering exhaustion.

In the village of Osynovo in the eastern Kharkiv region, news of the meeting between Trump and Zelensky offered some hope to one of the frontline village's last remaining residents, Mykola Lytvynov.

Cleaning earth from vegetables in his backyard, the 80-year-old said he hoped the meeting could help bring about a negotiated end to the conflict.

"How long can we be at war? So many people have been killed, so many young people. And you see the massive level of destruction," he said.

He suggested Ukraine could have retained more of its territory by already entering into talks with Russia, but said he hoped for an end to the fighting for another, personal reason.

"Both my sons are fighting. I just want them to survive."

Ukraine also said that two civilians were killed in the Donetsk region and that seven people were wounded by attacks in the southern Kherson region.

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