

Zelensky Says Ukraine, EU Should Join U.S.-Russia Talks

By [AFP](#)

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday said allies should work toward determining a format for any upcoming peace talks with Russia and that Kyiv must be involved for successful negotiations.

His comments are the latest to pile speculation over the possibility of talks to end the brutal conflict that has cost tens of thousands of lives after almost three years of fighting.

"I understand that contacts can be in different formats," Zelensky said, referring to possible negotiations that would lead to "a just peace."

"I think we should focus on this today," he said.

President Vladimir Putin earlier this week said he was ready for talks with U.S. counterpart

Donald Trump on Ukraine, praising him as a "smart" leader who might have prevented the conflict from starting in February 2022.

Putin did not say when talks could take place, and the Kremlin said earlier it was still waiting for "signals" from Washington, despite Trump announcing Thursday he was willing to meet Putin "immediately."

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Trump, who was inaugurated on Monday, has called the conflict "ridiculous" and threatened Russia with tougher economic sanctions if it does not agree to stop its offensive.

Zelensky said in Kyiv that talks to end the war should be held between the United States, Ukraine and Russia, as well as the European Union.

"I can't say today what kind of negotiations will take place, what will be the structure of the negotiation process, because we don't have a common plan yet," Zelensky added.

He reiterated a common talking point among Ukrainian officials that any negotiations that excluded Kyiv would not ultimately guarantee any lasting peace.

"It is impossible to exclude Ukraine from any negotiation platform, or this negotiation platform will not have real results, but will have political results," he said.

"And such results will have nothing to do with security and the end of the war," he said.

Zelensky has put forward several proposals to end the conflict, including his so-called victory plan at a Ukraine summit last year that brought together dozens of countries and international organizations.

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