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Trump Team Not in Touch With Kremlin, Russian Officials Say

By AFP

January 27, 2025



The Kremlin. **Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP / TASS**

No one in U.S. President Donald Trump's new administration has made contact with the Kremlin about setting up a meeting with Vladimir Putin, Russian officials said Monday.

Trump, who took office last week Monday, told reporters he was willing to meet the Russian president "immediately" to reach a deal on ending the war in Ukraine, but neither side has yet to indicate when talks might happen.

"Contacts with the new administration have not started," Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told Russian state news agencies on Monday, adding there had been no "direct" communication with members of Trump's administration.

"What we have in terms of dialogue with Washington is carried out through embassies, as before," he added.

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The Kremlin said Monday both leaders appeared ready for a high-level meeting, but that it was still waiting for word from Washington.

"So far, we have not received any signals from the Americans. The readiness remains. The same readiness, as we have heard, remains on the American side," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

In a post on his Truth Social network last Wednesday, Trump said he was "not looking to hurt Russia" but would impose more sanctions and hike tariffs on the country if Putin did not make a deal to settle the conflict in Ukraine.

Putin on Friday said he was ready for talks, praising Trump as a "smart" and "pragmatic" man who might have prevented Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine from happening in the first place.

Kyiv has warned against it being excluded from any peace talks, accusing Putin of wanting to "manipulate" Trump.

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