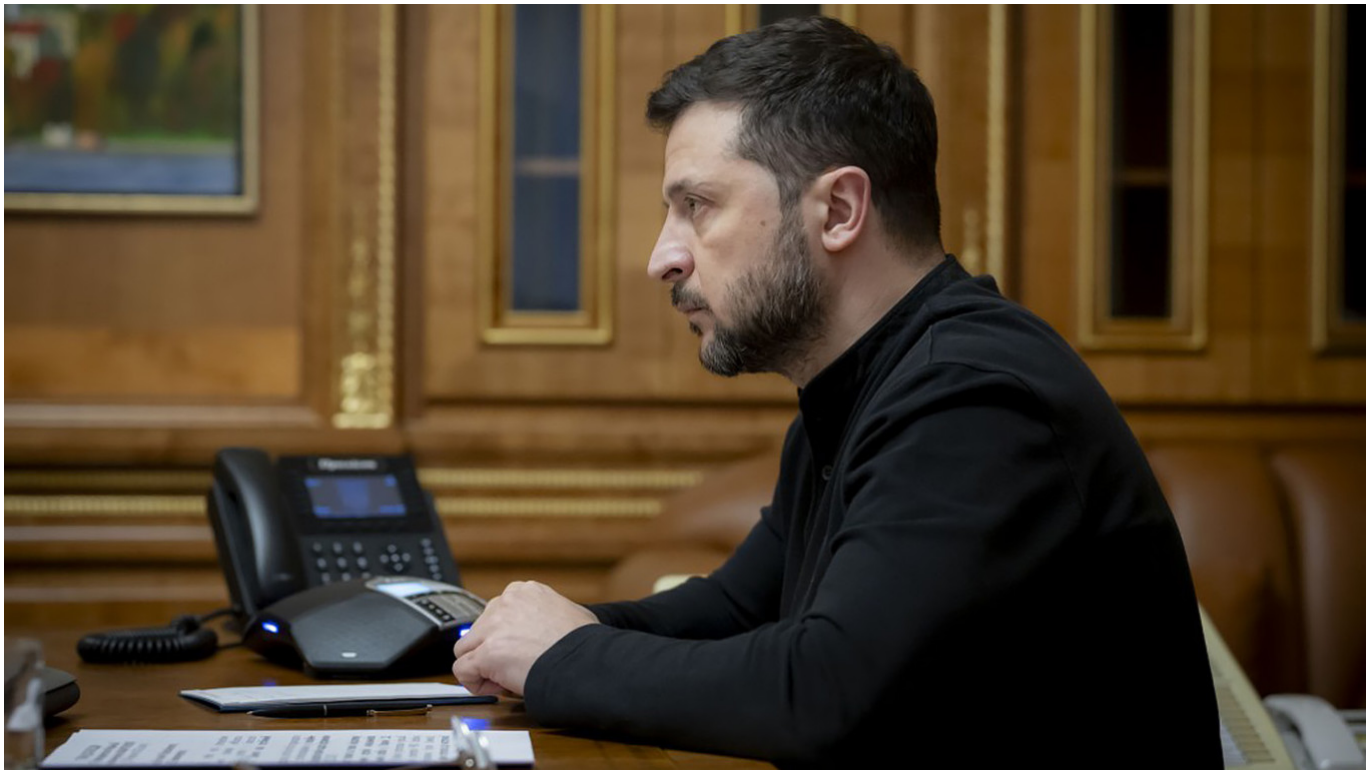
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Zelensky Warns Against Halting Military Aid Ahead of Call With Trump

By AFP

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenesky. **president.gov.ua**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday warned against heeding Kremlin demands to halt military aid to Kyiv and announced plans to speak with U.S. President Donald Trump later in the day.

Russian President Vladimir Putin made the demand during a call with Trump on Tuesday, as Washington seeks to broker a full ceasefire more than three years into Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

"I do not believe that we should make any concessions in terms of assistance for Ukraine, but rather there should be an increase in assistance for Ukraine," Zelensky said at a press conference with Finnish President Alexander Stubb.

An increase in aid, he added, would "signal that Ukraine is ready for any surprises from the

Russians."

Tuesday's phone call between Putin and Trump failed to secure a broad ceasefire that Ukraine has been pushing for after endorsing a U.S.-led proposal last week. However, the Kremlin agreed to halt Russian strikes on Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

Zelensky said in Helsinki that he hoped to learn more details during his upcoming call with Trump.

"Today, I will have contacts with President Trump, and we will discuss the next steps," he said.

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Earlier, Zelensky accused Russia of effectively rejecting the U.S.-backed ceasefire proposal, citing an overnight barrage of Russian drone and missile strikes that killed one person, wounded others and damaged two hospitals.

"Putin's words are very much at odds with reality," he said.

Zelensky called for the U.S. to take the lead in overseeing any agreement to halt Russian and Ukrainian strikes on energy infrastructure.

"The United States should be the main controlling entity," he said. "If the Russians don't hit our targets, we will definitely not hit their targets."

He also urged Washington to maintain pressure on Moscow to agree to a full ceasefire.

Putin told Trump that for a complete ceasefire to hold, Ukraine must be prevented from rearming and must halt mandatory military mobilization — conditions Kyiv says would leave it vulnerable to further Russian attacks.

Ukraine said it was ready to send negotiators to Saudi Arabia for further talks on both the energy ceasefire and a maritime truce that it has previously proposed.

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