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Russian Negotiator Says He's Hoping for 'Some Progress' at Talks in Saudi Arabia Next Week

By AFP

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Russian Senator Grigory Karasin. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

Moscow hopes to make "some progress" at upcoming talks in Saudi Arabia, a Russian negotiator told state media Saturday, as U.S. officials prepare for separate discussions with Ukrainian and Russian officials on a possible ceasefire.

Russia has rejected a joint U.S.-Ukraine proposal for a full, unconditional 30-day ceasefire, instead suggesting only a halt to aerial strikes on energy infrastructure.

The U.S. is set to hold parallel talks with Ukrainian and Russian delegations on Monday in an effort to break the deadlock.

"We hope to achieve at least some progress," Senator Grigory Karasin told Zvezda TV, a channel run by Russia's Defense Ministry.

Karasin, who will represent Russia alongside FSB adviser Sergey Beseda, described his mood as both "combative and constructive" ahead of the talks.

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Russia's choice of negotiators has drawn scrutiny, as neither Karasin nor Beseda are part of traditional diplomatic bodies like the Kremlin or the Foreign and Defense Ministries.

Karasin is a former diplomat now serving in Russia's upper house of parliament, while Beseda is a veteran of the FSB security service.

The FSB previously acknowledged that Beseda was in Kyiv during Ukraine's 2014 pro-EU revolution, when security forces violently cracked down on protesters.

"We are going with the goal of resolving at least one issue," Karasin told Zvezda TV.

He added that the Russian delegation would depart for Saudi Arabia on Sunday and return Tuesday.

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