

Resumption of Direct Flights Depends on Ukraine Ceasefire, U.S. Tells Russia

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Kirill Kukhmar / TASS

The United States has told Russian envoys that it will only consider resuming direct air travel between the two countries if progress is made toward a ceasefire in Ukraine, a senior Russian official said Thursday.

“The Americans still believe there needs to be progress on the Ukrainian track before any talk of restoring air travel,” Yury Ushakov, a foreign policy aide to President Vladimir Putin, [told](#) state TV journalist Pavel Zarubin.

“Although to me, it seems like this would be a perfectly logical decision,” he said.

The U.S. and the European Union closed their airspace to Russian carriers following Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Moscow responded with reciprocal bans on airlines from Western countries.

Russia first [raised](#) the possibility of restoring direct flights during talks with American

officials in Istanbul on Feb. 27 amid a rapid thaw in relations between Moscow and the new Trump administration.

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The topic came up again in early April, when Kirill Dmitriev, head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund, traveled to Washington to meet with Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff. Following those talks, Dmitriev [said](#) that “active work” was underway to re-establish direct air service.

Russia's newly appointed ambassador to the U.S., Alexander Darchiev, [said](#) last month that he planned to “work substantively” on restoring air links and simplifying visa procedures for citizens of both countries. He claimed that practical steps had already begun and were gaining momentum.

However, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has downplayed the talks.

“I haven't heard anything about direct flights,” Rubio [said](#) shortly after Dmitriev's visit. “I can tell you — but I don't know who's going to fly on it, because all these people are sanctioned.”

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