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Zelensky Offers to Meet Putin in Turkey ‘Personally’

By AFP

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday urged Russia to accept a 30-day truce proposed by Kyiv's allies, adding he expected Russian President Vladimir Putin to attend peace talks in Turkey. **president.gov.ua**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Sunday he would be willing to meet Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Turkey “personally,” after Donald Trump said direct talks were needed to determine whether peace was possible.

The Kremlin did not immediately respond to Zelensky's offer, and the Ukrainian leader did not say whether he would still attend if Russia refused a 30-day ceasefire proposed by Kyiv and its allies on Saturday.

Moscow and Kyiv have not held face-to-face negotiations since March 2022, shortly after the Kremlin launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February of that year.

“We await a full and lasting ceasefire, starting from tomorrow, to provide the necessary basis for diplomacy,” Zelensky said in a post on X.

“There is no point in prolonging the killings. And I will be waiting for Putin in Türkiye on Thursday. Personally. I hope that this time the Russians will not look for excuses,” he added.

In the early hours of Sunday, Putin proposed to resume the talks between the two sides held in Istanbul in March 2022. But he did not respond to the 30-day ceasefire proposal put forward by Kyiv's allies.

U.S. President Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform earlier: “President Putin of Russia doesn't want to have a Cease Fire Agreement with Ukraine, but rather wants to meet on Thursday, in Turkey, to negotiate a possible end to the BLOODBATH.”

“Ukraine should agree to this, IMMEDIATELY. At least they will be able to determine whether or not a deal is possible, and if it is not, European leaders, and the U.S., will know where everything stands, and can proceed accordingly!”

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Kyiv and its Western allies have said an unconditional ceasefire to pause the fighting is the only way to advance a diplomatic solution in three-year-old conflict — Europe's worst since the Second World War.

Russia's assault has resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people, the destruction of Ukrainian cities and a collapse in relations between Moscow and the West.

On a visit to Kyiv on Saturday the leaders of France, the U.K., Germany and Poland pressured Russia — with Trump's support — to commit to an unconditional ceasefire in Ukraine starting from Monday.

Zelensky's chief of staff Andriy Yermak suggested Kyiv would only come to the table if Moscow agreed to the ceasefire from Monday.

“Russia must cease fire, then everything else. President Volodymyr Zelensky is ready to do everything to end the war and will wait for Putin on Thursday,” Yermak said.

“And what about Putin? Is he afraid? We'll see,” he added.

Russian and Ukrainian officials last met in Istanbul in March 2022.

Those talks resulted in a now-aborted peace proposal that would have forced Kyiv to adopt neutral status and renounce any NATO ambitions.

Since then communication channels have only been open for exchanges of prisoners of war and bodies.

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