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Kremlin Yet to Confirm Who It's Sending to Istanbul Talks With Ukraine

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Istanbul, Turkey. **Yasin Akgul / AFP**

Russian officials will take part in direct negotiations with Ukraine in Turkey this week, but Moscow cannot yet disclose who it will send to represent it at the talks, the Kremlin said Tuesday, just two days ahead of the scheduled meeting.

"Russia continues preparing for Thursday's negotiations. That's all we can say for now," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters during a daily briefing.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to personally meet with him in Istanbul during the talks, but the Kremlin has so far refused to say whether the Russian leader is ready for a face-to-face meeting with Zelensky.

Putin proposed the negotiations as a counteroffer to a Western-backed call for a 30-day ceasefire. While the president did not address the ceasefire proposal directly, he said he could not "exclude" that the Istanbul negotiations might result in such an agreement.

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Peskov said Tuesday that the Russian delegation would be announced "as soon as the president deems it necessary."

U.S. President Donald Trump, who is visiting the Middle East this week, told reporters on Monday that he would join the Istanbul talks "if he thought it would be helpful."

Putin and Zelensky have not met since December 2019, more than two years before Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The two sides last held direct talks in Istanbul in March 2022, which produced a draft peace proposal that would have required Kyiv to adopt a position of neutrality and forgo NATO membership. That deal ultimately fell through.

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