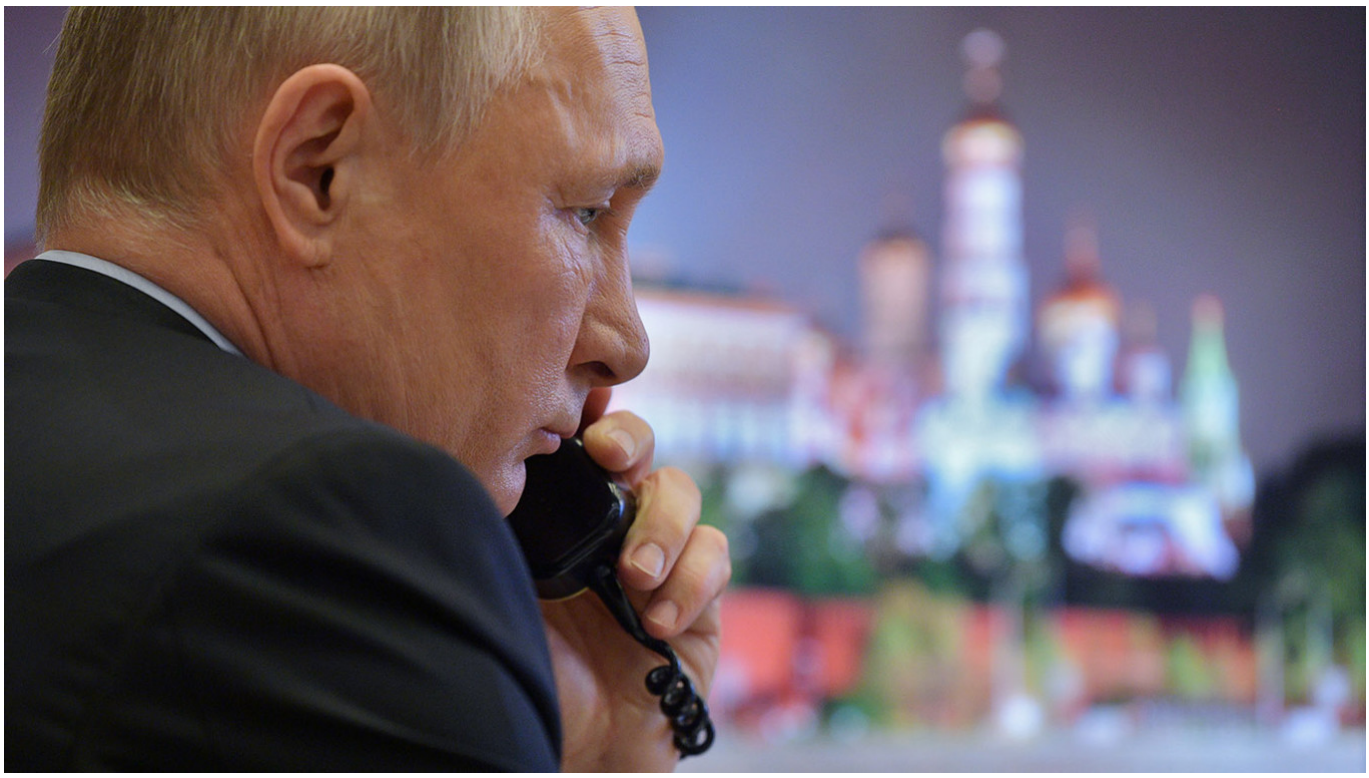
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Trump Says Russia and Ukraine to ‘Immediately Start’ Ceasefire Talks After Putin Call

By Danny Kemp for AFP

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Alexei Druzhinin / POOL / TASS

Donald Trump said Russia and Ukraine had agreed to "immediately" start ceasefire talks on Monday after the U.S. president spoke for more than two hours on the phone to Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Putin said separately that he was ready to work with Ukraine on a memorandum towards a possible peace deal — but fell short of giving Trump the unconditional 30-day ceasefire he sought.

Trump had set up the call amid increasing frustrations with both Moscow and Kyiv after promising during his election campaign to end the grinding three-year conflict in 24 hours.

"Just completed my two-hour call with President Vladimir Putin of Russia. I believe it went

very well," Trump said on his Truth Social network.

"Russia and Ukraine will immediately start negotiations toward a Ceasefire and, more importantly, an END to the War."

Trump added that the "tone and spirit of the conversation were excellent."

The Vatican — where Pope Leo XIV was recently elected as the first American pontiff — would be "very interested" in hosting the Russia-Ukraine talks, Trump added.

The Kremlin leader appeared to give one of the most concrete signs yet of being ready to discuss an end to Moscow's invasion of its neighbor, which has been allied with the United States and European Union.

"It was very informative and very open and overall, in my opinion, very useful," Putin told Russian media after the call.

'Right path'

Putin said that Russia would "propose and will be ready to work with the Ukrainian side on a memorandum on a possible future peace agreement defining a range of positions."

The Russian president added that talks with Kyiv last week in Istanbul had put the world "on the right path" to resolving the conflict but said more compromises were still needed.

Trump reportedly spoke to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky before the call with Putin.

On social media, Trump said he had "informed" Zelensky, European Commission President Ursula von Der Leyen and the leaders of France, Germany, Italy and Finland of the resumption of peace talks in a call immediately after his conversation with Putin.

With Ukraine saying Russia launched a "record" drone attack at the weekend, the White House had earlier warned that Trump was "weary and frustrated" with the slow-moving peace efforts.

Vice President J.D. Vance reiterated that Trump was losing patience.

"There's a bit of an impasse here," Vance told reporters as he left Rome, where he met both the pope and Zelensky. "If Russia is not willing to do that, then we're eventually just going have to say, this is not our war."

Trump has directed much of his frustration towards Ukraine — including during a blazing Oval Office row with Zelensky in February.

But while abstaining from extensively criticizing Putin, he has also signaled concerns that the Russian president may be stringing him along.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said fresh sanctions were still an option if Russia fails to reach a deal.

Trump still hoped to meet Putin, she added, after the U.S. president said that face-to-face talks were the only way to end the conflict.

Trump had held out the possibility of joining Russia-Ukraine peace talks in Istanbul last week if there was a chance of meeting Putin, but the Russian leader was a no-show.

Zelensky refreshed his push for a "full and unconditional" ceasefire ahead of the call.

'Bloodbath'

Last week's Istanbul talks were the first direct negotiations between the sides for three years, with US officials also attending. But the meetings ended without a commitment to a ceasefire.

After the negotiations, Trump announced that he would speak by phone with Putin in a bid to end the "BLOODBATH" in Ukraine, which has destroyed large swaths of the country and displaced millions of people.

Ukraine's allies have since accused Putin of ignoring calls for a truce and pushed for fresh sanctions against Russia.

On the ground, the Russian army continued its attacks.

Moscow claimed its forces had captured two villages in Ukraine's eastern Sumy and Donetsk regions. Russia also fired 112 drones on Ukraine overnight, 76 of which were repelled, the Ukrainian Air Force said.

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