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Zelensky Accuses Putin of 'Trying to Buy Time' in Peace Talks

By AFP

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. **president.gov.ua**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday accused Russia of stalling peace talks and seeking to prolong the war, despite U.S. efforts to broker a ceasefire.

U.S. President Donald Trump held separate calls with Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday. The two sides also met for the first direct negotiations in over three years in Istanbul on Friday, but the talks failed to produce a truce.

Zelensky said Putin had sent "empty heads" to the negotiating table and accused Moscow of using the talks to buy time.

"It is obvious that Russia is trying to buy time in order to continue its war and occupation," Zelensky wrote on social media.

Trump, who had pledged on the campaign trail to end the war within 24 hours if reelected,

framed his two-hour call with Putin as a breakthrough. But Putin again rejected an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, saying only that he was open to working on a memorandum outlining possible roadmaps and negotiating positions.

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Russia launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and now controls about one-fifth of Ukrainian territory.

Following Putin’s refusal to travel to Turkey for face-to-face talks with Zelensky, Ukraine and its European allies have pushed for a new round of sanctions against Moscow.

“Ukraine is ready for any negotiation format that delivers results,” Zelensky said. “And if Russia continues to put forward unrealistic conditions and undermine progress, there must be tough consequences.”

Kyiv accused Moscow’s negotiators of making sweeping and unacceptable territorial demands during the Istanbul talks, conditions Ukraine has repeatedly rejected.

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