

Kremlin Urges Ukraine to Confirm Istanbul Peace Talks Date

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. kremlin.ru

The Kremlin [said](#) Thursday that it was waiting for Ukraine to confirm its participation in a second round of peace talks proposed for next week in Turkey.

“So far, as I know, there’s been no response,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. “We need to wait for an answer from the Ukrainian side. Only then can we begin to move forward.”

Russian and Ukrainian officials last met in Istanbul on May 16 for their first direct talks since the early weeks of Russia’s full-scale invasion. Despite both sides agreeing to hold their largest-ever prisoner exchange, there was no breakthrough for a broad ceasefire.

Following a May 19 call with U.S. President Donald Trump, who has pushed for a settlement since taking office, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow was prepared to work with Kyiv on a “memorandum” outlining terms for a peace deal.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [said](#) Wednesday that Moscow was ready to present its proposal at the proposed meeting in Istanbul. However, last week, he [cast doubt](#) on any deal signed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, citing what Moscow describes as “legitimacy issues.”

Putin and other Russian officials have repeatedly claimed Zelensky’s presidency is no longer valid, as his five-year term technically expired in May 2024. However, Ukraine’s constitution does not allow for elections to be held during martial law, which was declared following Russia’s 2022 invasion.

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Chief Russian negotiator Vladimir Medinsky [said](#) late Wednesday that he proposed the date and venue for a second round of talks during a phone call with Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, who replied that Kyiv would consider it.

Umerov, writing on X, said he gave Russia a memorandum with Ukraine’s vision for a ceasefire agreement and was waiting for Moscow to fulfill its pledge to deliver its own after completing the latest prisoner exchange, which wrapped up on Sunday.

“We call on them to fulfill that promise without delay and stop trying to turn the meeting into a destructive one,” Umerov wrote.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha echoed those calls, urging Moscow to submit its memorandum “after 10 days of reflections and attacks.”

“Only a well-prepared meeting has the potential to produce tangible results,” he said.

Trump’s special envoy for Ukraine Keith Kellogg [said](#) earlier this week that Washington had received Ukraine’s memorandum and was waiting for Russia’s in order to “melt them together.”

Peskov [told](#) reporters on Thursday that it was “not constructive” to pressure Russia to submit its proposal, adding: “You should either confirm if you’re ready to continue negotiations or do the opposite.”

He [said](#) it was too early to discuss Moscow’s next steps if Kyiv declines to meet next week.

AFP contributed reporting.

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