The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Trump Gives Russia 50 Days to Resolve Ukraine War

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July 14, 2025



Molly Riley / The White House

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday told Russia to resolve its war on Ukraine within 50 days or face massive new economic sanctions as he laid out plans for new infusions of weaponry for Kyiv.

"We're very, very unhappy" with Russia, Trump told reporters as he met with NATO chief Mark Rutte in the White House.

"We're going to be doing very severe tariffs if we don't have a deal in 50 days, tariffs at about 100%," said Trump, adding that they would be "secondary tariffs" that target Russia's remaining trade partners — thereby seeking to cripple Moscow's ability to survive already sweeping Western sanctions.

Trump and Rutte also unveiled a deal under which the NATO military alliance would buy arms

from the United States — including Patriot anti-missile batteries — and then distribute them to Ukraine to help it battle Russia's invasion.

"This is billions of dollars worth of military equipment is going to be purchased from the United States, going to NATO... and that's going to be quickly distributed to the battlefield," Trump said.

Rutte, a former Dutch prime minister, said Ukraine would get "massive numbers" of weapons under the deal.

Trump launched a bid at rapprochement with Putin shortly after starting his second term in January, as he sought to honor his election campaign promise to end the Ukraine war within 24 hours.

His pivot towards Putin sparked fears in Kyiv that he was about to sell out Ukraine, especially after Trump and his team berated Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the Oval Office in February.

'Assassin'

But Trump has shown growing anger and frustration with Putin in recent weeks as the Russian leader, instead of halting his three-year invasion, instead stepped up attacks.

Trump added of Putin on Monday: "I don't want to say he's an assassin, but he's a tough guy."

Last week, Trump had teased an announcement on Monday on Russia. He then announced on Sunday that he would send vital Patriot air defense systems to Ukraine to help it fend off escalating barrages of Russian attacks.

Washington has also U-turned from an announcement earlier this month that it would pause some arms deliveries to Kyiv.

Rutte's visit to the White House is the first since the former Dutch prime minister described Trump as "daddy" at a NATO summit in The Hague in June.

Moscow has unleashed record waves of drone and missile strikes over the past few weeks, with the number of Ukrainian civilians killed or wounded in June hitting a three-year high, according to UN figures.

Trump's announcement on Monday came as his special envoy Keith Kellogg arrived in Kyiv to meet Zelensky.

Zelensky hailed the "productive meeting," saying they had discussed "strengthening Ukraine's air defense, joint production, and procurement of defense weapons in collaboration with Europe."

The Ukrainian leader also said he was "grateful to President Trump for the important signals of support and the positive decisions for both our countries."

'Better late than never'

One Ukrainian soldier deployed in the war-scarred east of the country, who identified himself by his call sign Grizzly, welcomed Trump's promise of fresh air defense systems.

"Better late than never," he told AFP.

"Because while we are here defending the front line, our families are unprotected. Thanks to the Patriots they are giving us, our families will be safer," the 29-year-old added.

Russian forces meanwhile said on Monday they had captured new territory in eastern Ukraine with the seizure of two villages, one in the Donetsk region and another in the Zaporizhzhia region.

Its forces also killed at least three civilians in the eastern Kharkiv and Sumy regions on Monday, regional Ukrainian officials announced.

In Kyiv, Zelensky also proposed a major political shake-up, recommending economy minister Yulia Svyrydenko take over as the country's new prime minister.

Svyrydenko said on social media that Ukraine was facing a "crucial time."

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