The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Rubio Urges Russia's Lavrov to Stop 'Killing' in Ukraine

By Gregory Walton for AFP

September 24, 2025



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio (4th L) and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (2nd R) during a meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. **Ilya Yermakov / TASS**

The top U.S. diplomat Marco Rubio issued a blunt call to his Russian counterpart to halt the "killing" in Ukraine Wednesday, as Washington's stance on Moscow hardened.

Rubio "reiterated President [Donald] Trump's call for the killing to stop and the need for Moscow to take meaningful steps toward a durable resolution of the Russia-Ukraine war," State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said.

President Volodymyr Zelensky had earlier praised Trump following the U.S. president's unexpected turn against Russia on Tuesday, in which he suggested that Kyiv could not only win the war and re-take its territory — but could even expand it.

But the Ukrainian leader cast doubt on NATO's ability to guarantee Kyiv's security.

"Because international institutions are too weak, this madness continues. Even being part of the long-standing military alliance doesn't automatically mean you are safe," Zelensky told the UN General Assembly on Wednesday.

Related article: Kremlin Rejects Trump's Claim That Ukraine Can Win the War

Zelensky said he had a "good meeting" with Trump, who has ruled out NATO membership for Kyiv and berated the Ukrainian leader at a February encounter at the White House before warming to him.

"Of course we are doing everything to make sure Europe truly helps and of course, we count on the United States," Zelensky said.

Trump's suggestion Tuesday that Kyiv could win, with support from the European Union and NATO, marked an extraordinary shift after months of saying Ukraine would not get back swaths of territory taken by Russia.

Trump said Ukraine could regain all its land and suggested, without elaborating, that Kyiv could "maybe even go further than that!"

'Big fat missiles'

The U.S. leader's comments marked his latest in a series of policy switches on Ukraine, including a sudden pivot to peace talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin early this year that stunned allies.

Zelensky warned Wednesday that Europe could not afford to lose strategically located Moldova to Russian influence and let it follow Belarus and Georgia into Moscow's orbit.

"Russia's trying to do to Moldova what Iran once did to Lebanon and the global response again, [is] not enough. We have already lost Georgia in Europe... and for many, many years, Belarus has also been moving toward dependence on Russia. Europe cannot afford to lose Moldova too," he said at the UN General Assembly.

Moldova, a former Soviet republic, goes to the polls on Sunday with pro-EU President Maia Sandu facing a barrage of deepfake videos and other disinformation linked to Russia.

Zelensky also sounded the alarm over the development of autonomous drones and unmanned aerial vehicles capable of shooting down other drones and targeting critical infrastructure.

"We are now living through the most destructive arms race in human history, because this time it includes artificial intelligence," he said, adding that the only real security guarantees are "friends and weapons."

"If the world can't respond even to all threats, and if there is no strong platform for international security, will there be any peace left on earth?"

The wartime leader, who has a packed itinerary of meetings with world leaders while in New York for the UN's signature diplomatic week, stressed that Ukraine had been forced to ramp

up its military production.

"Ukraine doesn't have the big fat missiles dictators love to show off in parades, but we do have drones that can fly up to 2,000, 3,000 kilometers.

"We had no choice but to build them to protect our right to life."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/09/24/rubio-urges-russias-lavrov-to-stop-killing-in-ukraine-a90617