

Trump Says Zelensky and Putin 'Serious' in War Talks Sprint

By [Jim Watson for AFP](#), [Shaun Tandon for AFP](#) and [Stanislav Doshchitsyn for AFP](#)

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Volodymyr Zelensky and Donald Trump ahead of their talks at Mar-a-Lago. **Jim Watson / AFP**

U.S. President Donald Trump said Sunday he believed the leaders of Ukraine and Russia were serious about peace as he spoke with them both in what he called the final stages of his efforts to end the war.

Trump, who had promised to finish the war on day one of his presidency, said he had no deadline but is embarking on a year-end diplomatic sprint as he welcomed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to his Florida estate.

Much like when Zelensky last met Trump in October, Russian President Vladimir Putin also spoke shortly beforehand by telephone with the U.S. leader, who immediately voiced new hope at working with Moscow, which has been seeking to avoid stronger pressure from Ukraine's allies in Washington and Europe.

Trump's renewed upbeat tone comes despite wide skepticism in Europe about Putin's intentions after Russia carried out another massive bombardment of the Ukrainian capital Kyiv just as Zelensky was heading to Florida.

Asked if Putin was committed to peace despite the attacks, Trump said: "He's very serious."

"I can say that I believe Ukraine has made some very strong attacks also, and I don't say that negatively. I think you probably have to," Trump said outside his estate.

Before the talks began, Trump posted on social media that his conversation with Putin was "very productive."

Speaking next to Zelensky, who stood a step below him at the entrance in front of waiting cameras, Trump said that an emerging agreement would also be good for Ukraine.

"There will be a security agreement. It'll be a strong agreement," Trump said.

"And the European nations are very much involved in that. They'll be very much involved in protection, et cetera," he said.

Embed:

Trump greets Zelenskyy at Mar-a-Lago and says, "I've settled 8 wars and this is the most difficult one. I thought it would be in the middle of the pack."

pic.twitter.com/ma9KTq9xp0

— Aaron Rupar (@atrupar) [December 28, 2025](#)

Trump's advisers have previously floated the idea of offering NATO-like security guarantees to Ukraine, meaning in theory that the alliance's members would respond militarily if Russia attacks again.

Russia demands concessions

The Kremlin gave a more pointed readout of Trump's talks with Putin, saying that the U.S. leader agreed that a mere ceasefire "would only prolong the conflict" as it demanded Ukraine compromise on territory.

Zelensky, who in the past has faced verbal attacks from Trump, has sought to show willingness to work with the contours of the U.S. leader's plans, but Putin has offered no sign that he will accept it.

At their October meeting, Trump refused Zelensky's request for long-range Tomahawk missiles as Trump again said that Putin was showing positive signs.

Trump's talks with Zelensky are expected to last an hour, after which the two presidents are scheduled to hold a joint call with the leaders of key European allies.

Trump and Putin are also set to hold another phone call later Sunday.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who will join the call, wrote on X that the Russian attacks on Kyiv were "contrary to President Trump's expectations and despite the readiness to make compromises" by Zelensky.

The drone and missile assault on Kyiv temporarily knocked out power and heating to hundreds of thousands of residents during freezing temperatures.

Zelensky shows openness

The revised peace plan, which emerged from weeks of intense U.S.-Ukraine negotiations, would stop the war along its current front lines and could require Ukraine to pull troops back from the east, allowing the creation of demilitarized buffer zones.

As such, it contains Kyiv's most explicit acknowledgement yet of possible territorial concessions.

It does not, however, envisage Ukraine withdrawing from the 20% of the eastern Donetsk region that it still controls — Russia's main territorial demand.

Zelensky was careful to stay positive as he met Trump, saying: "It's very important to our teams talk about strategy."

The two leaders then entered the president's dining room surrounded by top aides, as Trump told the press to leave and have lunch.

Russia has accused Ukraine and its European backers of trying to "torpedo" a previous U.S.-brokered plan to stop the fighting, and recent battlefield gains — Russia announced on Saturday it had captured two more towns in eastern Ukraine — are seen as strengthening Moscow's hand in peace talks.

"If the authorities in Kyiv don't want to settle this business peacefully, we'll resolve all the problems before us by military means," Putin said on Saturday.

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