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Zelensky Says Next Round of Peace Talks With Russia Expected in March

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Volodymyr Zelensky. **Henry Nicholls / AFP**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Thursday that he expects a new round of peace talks with Russia to be held next month in Abu Dhabi, coming after U.S. envoys held separate talks with Russian and Ukrainian officials in Geneva.

"As a result of today's meetings, there is already more readiness for the next trilateral format," Zelensky said, adding that the meeting would "most likely" take place in Abu Dhabi in early March.

"We need to finalize everything that has been achieved in terms of real security guarantees and prepare for a meeting at the leadership level," he said in a nightly address after the Geneva talks ended.

"This format can solve a lot," Zelensky said, referring to a potential meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

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Ukrainian top negotiator Rustem Umerov met with U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law in Geneva on Thursday to discuss a number of issues, including Ukraine's post-war reconstruction.

"We worked out a document on the restoration of Ukraine in detail," Umerov said after the meeting. The sides "agreed positions that will form the basis for further agreements," he added.

Russian economic envoy Kirill Dmitriev was also present on Thursday at the meeting venue in Geneva — the Hotel des Bergues. There was no indication he had met with Ukrainian officials, according to Russian state media.

Vice Chairman of U.S. investment fund BlackRock, Philipp Hildebrand, was also seen at the Hotel des Bergues, according to an AFP photographer.

Despite multiple rounds of U.S.-brokered peace talks since President Donald Trump returned to the White House last year, neither Ukraine nor Russia appears ready to sign a peace agreement.

Trump reportedly told Zelensky over the phone this week that he wants the war to end by the summer. But the U.S. president has repeatedly set hard deadlines for Russia and Ukraine to sign a peace deal, only for those dates to pass with no sign of significant progress in negotiations.

"Have you heard anything from us about deadlines? We have no deadlines. We have tasks. We are working on them," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told state media on Thursday.

AFP contributed reporting.

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