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Bessent Reportedly Tells Russian Finance Minister No Economic Lifelines Until Ukraine War Ends

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Russia's Finance Minister Anton Siluanov attends a G20 summit of finance ministers and central bank governors in Asheville, North Carolina. **REUTERS / Sam Wolfe**

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov on Monday that Washington will not grant Russia economic relief or negotiate side agreements until Moscow ends its war against Ukraine, a source told Reuters.

The meeting between Bessent and Siluanov took place on the sidelines of a G20 summit of finance ministers and central bank governors in Asheville, North Carolina. The United States currently holds the rotating G20 presidency.

Siluanov's unexpected visit, his first in-person attendance at a G20 event since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, drew immediate criticism from European officials.

"Receiving the Russian finance minister here sends a signal I find troubling," German

Finance Minister Lars Klingbeil told reporters.

Klingbeil said he would have preferred a clear U.S. stance denying Siluanov a regular guest platform.

Earlier, a U.S. official told Reuters that the focus of the Bessent-Siluanov meeting was President Donald Trump's peace plan for Ukraine. Russia's Finance Ministry said the two officials discussed economic cooperation within the G20 framework.

However, when Siluanov tried to discuss areas of mutual interest, the source said Bessent interrupted him, emphasizing that "nothing is possible until the war is over."

Asked about Siluanov's attendance, White House spokesman Kush Desai told AFP that the Trump administration has been working with Russia to push for a peace deal that "would stop the endless bloodshed that the president has really condemned."

"The president and the administration will never shy away from talking with the folks we need to talk to, to further that," Desai said. "That's what we're working on here at the G20."

Includes reporting from AFP and Reuters.

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