

Russia, Ukraine Agree on Ceasefire in Embattled Oleshky, Plan New Peace Talks Next Month

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Destroyed buildings in Oleshky, Kherson region. **34th Separate Marine Brigade "Borysfen"** / Handout via **REUTERS**

Ukraine and Russia said on Friday they had agreed on a ceasefire in the Russian-occupied Ukrainian town of Oleshky, brokered through U.S. first lady Melania Trump, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said peace negotiators would meet next month for new talks.

The two sides said the ceasefire would go into effect on Oct. 27, allowing the delivery of aid and the evacuation of residents through humanitarian corridors.

“Residents who wish to evacuate will receive coordinated support and transportation to their preferred destination. I anticipate some will want to go to Russia and some to Ukraine,” Melania Trump [said](#) in a statement.

The first lady noted that her intervention allowed both Russia and Ukraine to assign teams to

work on the technical terms of the process, including de-mining the heavily mined roads. "All parties have worked around the clock since that moment," she said.

Amid a U.S. push to organize new talks aimed at ending the 4.5-year-old war, Zelensky said negotiators from Ukraine, Russia and the United States had agreed to technical-level meetings in the first half of November in Abu Dhabi. A U.S. official later said the three countries may hold their next talks in a couple weeks in Abu Dhabi or Switzerland.

Zelensky said he hoped a meeting of the countries' leaders would follow.

Previous rounds of talks headed by the United States stalled in February with no significant progress towards ending the bloodiest conflict in Europe since World War II. Russia continues to demand Ukraine cede all of the eastern Donbas region, including territory Russia has not occupied militarily, while Kyiv rejects any notion of giving up land it currently holds.

The latest peace efforts follow a rift between Washington and Kyiv in recent weeks and a series of moves by US President Donald Trump seen as favouring Russia.

A major source of friction was limitations placed on SpaceX's Starlink communication system that Ukraine uses to protect against incoming attacks. Trump said on Friday that if Ukraine still faced a problem with the system, he would straighten it out and, if necessary, speak about the matter to SpaceX CEO Elon Musk.

Another contentious point was Trump's announcement of a deal to allow Russia to provide diesel for the US and global markets, an agreement denounced by Ukraine and meant to keep prices down as the president's Republicans contest U.S. midterm elections.

On Friday, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said the first three tankers with Russian diesel were on their way to North America.

Related article: [In Russian-Occupied Oleshky, Civilians Struggle to Survive as Hunger Deepens](#)

In the town of Oleshky, occupied by Russian forces since February 2022, residents have reported that they faced a deepening food crisis.

"Both nations agreed to temporarily stop all military action in Oleshky to allow for humanitarian aid to enter and to prepare a civilian evacuation through a designated safe passageway," the White House said in a statement.

The chief of staff of Russian forces, Valery Gerasimov, said on the Defense Ministry's Telegram channel that Russian troops would halt fire from 4 a.m. local time on Oct. 27 to allow for the humanitarian operation to start.

Ukraine's General Staff issued a statement agreeing to observe the ceasefire from the same time and pledging to "do everything possible to help Oleshky's residents." Ukraine says it has already used drones twice to send food into the town.

Ukraine's human rights ombudsman, Dmytro Lubinets, also said the ceasefire would go into effect on Oct. 27 and told Reuters the operation would involve demining roads to the town,

deliveries of food and evacuations of civilians.

Melania Trump's diplomatic efforts

Both sides said Melania Trump played an important role in coordinating the agreement. The first lady has been active in trying to get Ukrainian children seized by Russia during the war returned to their families.

"Oleshky is a frontline war city on the brink of disaster," she said in a statement.

"Oleshky's remaining population is comprised primarily of elderly residents who urgently need medical attention, medicine, food and clean water."

The White House said Oleshky, located across the Dnipro River from the Ukrainian-held city of Kherson, had 1,700 to 2,000 residents remaining, down from 24,000 before the war.

Moscow and Kyiv both accuse each other of blocking supplies to the population of the town, which Ukrainian forces have been trying to retake.

Earlier, the Kremlin said that President Vladimir Putin had discussed the situation in Oleshky with U.S. President Donald Trump and told him that Russia's human rights commissioner was working on humanitarian efforts there.

Putin also told Pope Leo in a phone call last Friday that he supported a Vatican initiative to help deliver supplies to civilians in Oleshky and was ready to cooperate on the matter. At the same time, he laid blame for the dire humanitarian situation in the town on Ukraine.

U.S. envoys

Zelensky's comments on resuming peace talks followed a meeting with U.S. presidential envoy Steve Witkoff in Norway early this week and a subsequent meeting between Witkoff and Putin in St. Petersburg.

Zelensky said he spoke on Friday with Witkoff and U.S. envoy Jared Kushner. He said any peace agreement would need strong security guarantees for Ukraine and funding for 10 years to maintain the Ukrainian army.

"The plan is to meet in the first half of November, and as early as possible, of course," Zelensky told the Hudson Institute think tank via a video link. He said much would depend on Russia, noting that a similar meeting expected this month had not materialized.

Zelensky spoke of the importance of continued diplomatic efforts to reach a ceasefire and end the war, now in its fifth year, adding that Europe should also be involved in the talks.

Ukrainian officials said on Friday that speed restrictions on Starlink systems in Ukraine remained in place, despite Trump's previous statement that the services had been fully restored.

Trump told reporters at the White House on Friday that he had not spoken to Musk about the restrictions but would do so if required.

"If there is a problem, I'll get it straightened out," he said. The caps have been in place since Oct. 13.

Ukraine and Russia also swapped 270 servicemen each in a prisoner exchange on Friday, the Russian Defense Ministry said. Zelensky described the swap, the first since August, as a "very important result."

Ukraine's acting prosecutor, Anton Kovalskyi, writing on Telegram, said more than 19,000 Ukrainian civilians, including 762 children, had been killed since Russia launched its full-scale war more than four years ago.

Reuters contributed reporting.

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