The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Melania Trump to Host Russian and Ukrainian Delegations at White House

November 03, 2026



Residents from the occupied town of Oleshky return to Ukrainian-controlled territory. **REUTERS / Valentyn Ogirenko**

U.S. first lady Melania Trump will host representatives from Russia and Ukraine at the White House this week to deliver remarks on a recently concluded ceasefire and humanitarian mission in the occupied Ukrainian town of Oleshky, the White House announced Tuesday.

The six-day ceasefire, which ended Sunday, had allowed emergency aid to reach Oleshky and any civilians to leave if they wanted, either to Ukrainian-controlled territory or Russia.

"This achievement marks an unprecedented diplomatic initiative by an American First Lady," the White House said in a statement, adding that Melania Trump will deliver an address on the Oleshky ceasefire at 11 a.m. Eastern Time on Thursday.

It did not name the Russian and Ukrainian representatives invited to appear during the address.

A Ukrainian official told The Kyiv Independent that Russian Human Rights Commissioner Yana Lantratova and her Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Lubinets will attend the White House event.

Lantratova is currently under U.S. sanctions and will need a sanctions waiver from the State Department to enter the country.

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The announcement follows a report in the French newspaper Le Monde that claimed the humanitarian operation in Oleshky was negotiated over the course of four months by Russia's GRU and Ukraine's HUR military intelligence agencies.

Sources cited by the newspaper suggested that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to credit the first lady for the ceasefire as a way to placate U.S. President Donald Trump as he seeks a diplomatic breakthrough in peace negotiations.

The White House statement on Tuesday said Melania Trump "independently initiated engagement between the two warring nations and successfully secured a ceasefire in Oleshky and the surrounding Kherson region."

Russia and the U.S. confirmed this week that trilateral talks aimed at ending the war in Ukraine will resume in Abu Dhabi on Nov. 10 and 11 after having stalled in February due to the conflict in the Middle East.

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