# Russian Su-35 violation raises alarm amid Putin-Zelensky peace deadlock



A recent incursion of a Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jet into Estonian airspace has reignited concerns over security in the Baltic region, reflecting heightened tensions between NATO and Russia. The breach, which lasted approximately one minute and involved a jet flying without a flight plan, transponders, or radio contact, was condemned by Estonia's Foreign Minister, Margus Tsahkna. He characterised the incident as "very serious" and "not acceptable in any way." Following the incursion, NATO’s Baltic Air Policing mission activated Portuguese F-16s to conduct a reconnaissance flight, showcasing the alliance's commitment to the security of its member states.

Tsahkna's remarks coincide with an ongoing military exercise named Exercise Hedgehog, involving over 16,000 NATO troops, which underscores the region's strategic importance. This incident marks the first recorded violation of Estonian airspace in 2023 and raises alarm as it comes amid ongoing diplomatic strains surrounding the conflict in Ukraine. The recent reluctance of Russian President Vladimir Putin to engage in peace talks further complicates the situation, reflecting a broader backdrop of hostility between the two nations.

Despite claims from Putin during a virtual G20 summit that Russia has never refused peace talks, tensions remain palpable. The Russian leader has pointed fingers at Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, suggesting his government is unwilling to negotiate, particularly following Zelensky's decree that prohibits any discussions with Russia. This ongoing narrative portrays Zelensky as an obstacle to peace, whereas many observers argue that it is Putin’s refusal to engage directly that prolongs the conflict.

In January 2025, Putin reiterated his stance on the illegitimacy of Zelensky, citing the lack of elections since the war began and implying that any negotiations should take place with other Ukrainian representatives instead. In contrast, Zelensky has countered these assertions, accusing Putin of evading meaningful dialogue and insisting that any pathway to peace must involve direct negotiations with him. This ongoing stalemate raises pressing questions about the future of diplomatic efforts and the potential for resolution in Ukraine.

The deteriorating situation in the Baltic states coupled with the standoff regarding Ukraine creates a complex geopolitical landscape. As NATO continues to bolster its presence in Eastern Europe, the need for effective diplomacy has never been more critical. The aviation incident serves as a stark reminder of the potential flashpoints that can escalate into broader confrontations amid these heightened tensions.

In summary, the ongoing violations of airspace, coupled with the diplomatic challenges over negotiations, illustrate the precarious and volatile nature of Russia-NATO relations. The international community remains watchful as efforts for resolution continue to ebb and flow, hindered by entrenched positions on both sides.

**Reference Map**1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2055831/nato-panic-brazen-vladimir-putin)2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2055831/nato-panic-brazen-vladimir-putin), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/29/ukraine-war-briefing-putin-refuses-direct-talks-with-zelenskyy)3. Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-updates-putin-says-russia-has-never-refused-peace-talks/live-67523820), [[3]](https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250128-putin-says-talks-with-ukraine-possible-but-not-with-zelensky)4. Paragraph 4: [[3]](https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250128-putin-says-talks-with-ukraine-possible-but-not-with-zelensky), [[5]](https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/putin-afraid-of-negotiations-zelensky-hits-back-after-kremlin-leader-labels-him-illegitimate.html)5. Paragraph 5: [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/29/ukraine-war-briefing-putin-refuses-direct-talks-with-zelenskyy), [[6]](https://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20250128-putin-says-talks-with-ukraine-possible-but-not-with-zelensky)6. Paragraph 6: [[5]](https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/putin-afraid-of-negotiations-zelensky-hits-back-after-kremlin-leader-labels-him-illegitimate.html)7. Paragraph 7: [[6]](https://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20250128-putin-says-talks-with-ukraine-possible-but-not-with-zelensky), [[7]](https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-updates-putin-says-russia-has-never-refused-peace-talks/live-67523820)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2055831/nato-panic-brazen-vladimir-putin> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-updates-putin-says-russia-has-never-refused-peace-talks/live-67523820> - In November 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed a virtual G20 summit, stating that Russia has never refused peace talks with Ukraine. He criticized Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky for issuing a decree prohibiting negotiations with Russia, suggesting that the Ukrainian government is not open to dialogue. Putin emphasized Russia's willingness to negotiate and called for the cancellation of Zelensky's decree to facilitate discussions. This statement highlights the ongoing diplomatic tensions and differing perspectives on the conflict in Ukraine.
3. <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250128-putin-says-talks-with-ukraine-possible-but-not-with-zelensky> - In January 2025, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that Russia is open to peace talks with Ukraine but ruled out direct negotiations with President Volodymyr Zelensky, whom he labeled 'illegitimate' due to the expiration of his term during martial law. Putin suggested that if Zelensky wishes to participate in negotiations, he should cancel the decree prohibiting talks with Russia. Ukrainian President Zelensky responded by accusing Putin of avoiding negotiations and prolonging the conflict, emphasizing the need for direct talks to achieve peace.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/29/ukraine-war-briefing-putin-refuses-direct-talks-with-zelenskyy> - In January 2025, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared that he would not engage in direct talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, labeling him 'illegitimate' due to the lack of elections since the onset of the war. Putin suggested that negotiations could be conducted with other representatives from Ukraine. This stance has raised concerns about the prospects for peace and the future of diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict in Ukraine.
5. <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/putin-afraid-of-negotiations-zelensky-hits-back-after-kremlin-leader-labels-him-illegitimate.html> - In January 2025, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of deliberately prolonging the war and avoiding peace negotiations. Zelensky's remarks came after Putin labeled him 'illegitimate' and refused direct talks. The Ukrainian leader emphasized the need for direct negotiations to end the conflict and criticized Putin's tactics as aimed at making the war endless.
6. <https://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20250128-putin-says-talks-with-ukraine-possible-but-not-with-zelensky> - In January 2025, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that Russia is open to peace talks with Ukraine but ruled out direct negotiations with President Volodymyr Zelensky, whom he labeled 'illegitimate' due to the expiration of his term during martial law. Putin suggested that if Zelensky wishes to participate in negotiations, he should cancel the decree prohibiting talks with Russia. Ukrainian President Zelensky responded by accusing Putin of avoiding negotiations and prolonging the conflict, emphasizing the need for direct talks to achieve peace.
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