# Trump claims peace in Ukraine hinges on meeting Putin amid stalled talks in Istanbul



In a stark assertion regarding the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, Donald Trump stated that no peace agreement can be realised until he meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin. This remark, made during the final phase of his Middle Eastern tour, highlights the complexities and expectations surrounding upcoming diplomatic engagements, particularly the peace talks scheduled to occur in Turkey. Trump suggested that the absence of his involvement might have been a factor in Putin’s decision to withdraw from the negotiations, stating, “Nothing is going to happen until Putin and I get together… obviously, he was going to go but he thought I was going to go.”

Putin had initially called for direct talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, but he declined to attend the discussions that were set to begin in Istanbul. The Kremlin left the international community in suspense for days regarding Putin's participation before ultimately announcing he would not attend, prompting Zelensky to criticise this ‘theatrical’ behaviour. Zelensky expressed doubts about Russia's genuine commitment to peace negotiations, asserting that true engagement requires a willingness from the involved parties to reach a resolution, stating, “All parties must demonstrate willingness to take part in negotiations... the first step must be an unconditional ceasefire.”

The diplomatic meeting in Istanbul, the first since March 2022, sees Ukraine represented by Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, whereas Moscow has sent a lower-level delegation led by Vladimir Medinsky, suggesting a lack of seriousness on Russia's part. Observers note that the absence of key leaders reduces the likelihood of significant progress. Both Trump and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio have underscored the necessity of high-level dialogue, indicating that any meaningful negotiation hinges on Trump’s involvement. Rubio emphasised the challenge posed by the current geopolitical context, where Russia’s battlefield gains potentially empower its refusal to yield in negotiations.

As the war continues, both sides remain entrenched in their positions, with Ukraine advocating for an immediate ceasefire while Russia demands assurances against Western military assistance and Ukraine's alignment with NATO. This standoff is exacerbated by the ongoing violence and territorial disputes that have defined the conflict since its escalation in 2022. The potential for further military action by Russia looms large, with assessments suggesting that Moscow is keen to stall peace talks to consolidate its territorial advances.

Zelensky’s comments were made in conjunction with his meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Ankara, as he navigates the intricacies of international diplomacy. His position reflects a broader skepticism shared by many international leaders regarding Russia’s motives, particularly as the conflict inflicts a toll of casualties and humanitarian crises within Ukraine.

The gathering at the Dolmabahce Palace in Istanbul is seen as a crucial moment, yet low expectations pervade discussions. The absence of senior figures like Putin and uncertainty surrounding Trump's potential contributions raise questions about the future of peace efforts in Ukraine, leaving the international community to ponder the elusive goal of a sustainable resolution to the war.

As this tense situation unfolds, observers are calling for heightened diplomatic engagement and increased pressure on Russia to demonstrate a willingness to negotiate earnestly. The stakes are high, not just for Ukraine but for global stability, as the conflict has ignited broader geopolitical tensions reminiscent of historical international crises.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: (1), (2), (4)
2. Paragraph 2: (1), (2)
3. Paragraph 3: (4), (5)
4. Paragraph 4: (2), (7)
5. Paragraph 5: (1), (3), (6)
6. Paragraph 6: (4), (7)
7. Paragraph 7: (3), (5)
8. Paragraph 8: (2), (4)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14717827/Donald-Trump-says-no-peace-Ukraine-Putin-Russian-despot-snubs-talks-Zelensky-Turkey.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/a5904221-c614-40ee-8f6b-b6bf77579440> - On May 15, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump stated that no progress would be made toward a Russia-Ukraine peace agreement without a direct meeting between himself and Russian President Vladimir Putin. This stance undermines upcoming diplomatic talks in Turkey between Russian and Ukrainian negotiators—the first since 2022. Trump emphasized that Putin had signaled he would not participate unless Trump was also present. Echoing this sentiment, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio expressed low expectations for the meeting, stating that meaningful progress requires Trump-Putin engagement. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, while attending talks in Turkey, expressed skepticism regarding the Russian delegation’s authority to negotiate and maintained his willingness to meet only with Putin. Zelenskyy’s delegation is led by Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, while Russia dispatched lesser-known officials including Vladimir Medinsky, signaling reduced commitment to serious negotiations. Meanwhile, calls for increased Western pressure on Russia continue, with Germany warning of alternative strategies if current efforts fail. Although the U.S. has sent envoys to Turkey, the lack of high-level Russian participation casts doubt on the outcome of the peace talks.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/fd17a0d5af96747e6d66558e91d0f9fd> - President Donald Trump concluded the final leg of his first major foreign trip in the United Arab Emirates, where he was welcomed by UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. He visited the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and attended a state dinner at the Qasr al-Watan palace, where he was awarded the Order of Zayed in recognition of his commitment to U.S.-UAE relations. Elsewhere, violence escalated in the Middle East, notably in Gaza and the West Bank, including airstrikes killing 54 in Khan Younis and the shutdown of Gaza’s only cancer hospital. Trump sidestepped questions on Israel’s role in the Gaza crisis but reiterated his vision of a "freedom zone" in Gaza. Discussions continued on Syria, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio announcing plans to ease Caesar Act sanctions following the new Syrian president's plea for aid. Trump also emphasized military strength during a speech in Qatar and expressed the need for direct talks with Putin to resolve the Ukraine war. Vice President JD Vance and Rubio are set to attend the inaugural mass of Pope Leo XIV. Meanwhile, the U.S. introduced legislation to monitor advanced chip exports and Democratic senators pushed to revive the Presidential Management Fellows Program.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-trump-skip-ukraines-peace-talks-that-russian-leader-proposed-2025-05-14/> - Peace talks between Ukraine and Russia, set to resume for the first time since March 2022 in Istanbul, are off to a muted start as Russian President Vladimir Putin declined to attend or send senior officials, opting instead for a lower-level delegation. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, citing disrespect, also opted out and appointed Defense Minister Rustem Umerov to lead Kyiv’s delegation. The lack of high-level participation dims hopes for a breakthrough, especially as U.S. President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio emphasized that progress is unlikely without direct talks between Trump and Putin. Scheduled to commence on May 16, the talks face challenges due to Russia's current battlefield advantage and its ongoing demands, including Ukraine's neutrality and territorial concessions. Meanwhile, Moscow reported gains in Donetsk, underscoring the tenuous nature of negotiations. As the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War II drags on, with hundreds of thousands killed or wounded, the international community watches closely, wary of diplomatic stagnation and the unpredictability injected by heightened political dynamics.
5. <https://elpais.com/expres/2025-05-15/putin-evita-el-cara-a-cara-con-zelenski-rusia-envia-emisarios-de-segundo-nivel-a-estambul.html> - El esperado encuentro entre Rusia y Ucrania en Estambul ha perdido relevancia antes de empezar debido a la ausencia de líderes clave como Vladímir Putin y Donald Trump. Rusia estará representada por Vladímir Medinski, quien ya lideró sin éxito las negociaciones de 2022, mientras que Estados Unidos enviará una delegación encabezada por el secretario de Estado, Marco Rubio, y el enviado para Oriente Próximo, Steve Witkoff. El presidente ucraniano, Volodímir Zelenski, ha declarado que solo aceptaría reunirse con Putin, aunque Ucrania sigue abierta a negociar en cualquier formato. Sin embargo, las expectativas son bajas debido a la repetición de figuras en las delegaciones y la ausencia de altos mandatarios, lo que reduce significativamente las posibilidades de avances concretos. Paralelamente, la OTAN celebra una cumbre en Turquía centrada en el aumento del gasto en defensa.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/d5bf2e83-7147-42f9-a9ae-9e7b7eb93a5c> - Russian President Vladimir Putin has decided not to participate in the proposed bilateral peace talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Istanbul, despite being the one to suggest them. His absence is seen as a pivotal moment in the broader diplomatic efforts to end Russia’s full-scale war in Ukraine, ongoing since February 2022. The failure to attend is likely to influence U.S. President Donald Trump’s perception of Moscow’s sincerity, especially as both Kyiv and Moscow attempt to gain his support by portraying the other as an obstacle to peace. Zelenskyy, who will still travel to Ankara to meet Turkey’s President Erdoğan, had indicated he would attend only if Putin was present. The EU and U.S. are now coordinating additional sanctions targeting Russia's financial and energy sectors. Meanwhile, the European Commission has resisted U.S. pressure to lower vehicle safety standards in trade talks, reaffirming its commitment to public safety and regulatory integrity despite ongoing tariff disputes. The next steps in both diplomatic and economic arenas remain closely watched as Europe balances geopolitical tensions with transatlantic relations.
7. <https://www.huffingtonpost.es/global/trump-asegura-habra-avances-sobre-guerra-ucrania-reuna-putin.html> - El presidente estadounidense, Donald Trump, ha declarado que no se realizarán avances significativos en las negociaciones de paz entre Rusia y Ucrania hasta que él se reúna personalmente con el presidente ruso, Vladímir Putin. Estas declaraciones se producen en el contexto de la primera reunión directa desde 2022 entre delegaciones de Kiev y Moscú, prevista para celebrarse en Estambul. Trump, hablando desde el Air Force One, enfatizó que Putin solo asistiría a las conversaciones si él mismo estuviera presente, lo cual no ocurrirá por ahora. Según el Gobierno turco, tanto Estados Unidos como Rusia ya tienen listas sus respectivas delegaciones para participar en estas negociaciones en Turquía, aunque no se ha confirmado la participación de mediadores turcos. Mientras tanto, el presidente ucraniano, Volodímir Zelenski, se encuentra en Ankara para reunirse con el presidente turco, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, y se espera una declaración sobre la participación de Ucrania en la reunión. El Kremlin ha afirmado que Putin no planea viajar a Estambul, aunque podría reconsiderarlo dependiendo del resultado de los contactos diplomáticos.