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Zelensky refuses Trump's push for peace deal

The Ukrainian leader has again claimed that a ceasefire is needed to negotiate an end to the conflict with Russia



Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky meets European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in Brussels. © Getty Images / EU Commission

Ukraine's Vladimir Zelensky has rejected US President Donald Trump's call for a peace deal between Moscow and Kiev, reiterating that a truce has to be implemented before discussing details of a possible settlement.

Zelensky made the statement on Sunday during a joint press-conference with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who will accompany him to Washington for talks with Trump on Monday.

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The Ukrainian leader claimed that Moscow had made *“many demands”* on the settlement of the conflict and that Kiev needs to be made aware of them.

“If there are really as many as we have heard, then it will take time to go through them all,” he said.

According to Zelensky, it is *“impossible”* for Ukraine to negotiate *“under pressure of weapons.”*



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“It is necessary to ceasefire and work quickly on a final deal,” he insisted.

Russia has repeatedly turned down Ukraine's demands for a ceasefire, saying that a pause in the fighting would be exploited by Kiev to rearm and regroup its forces.

The Ukrainian leader also ruled out the possibility of making territorial concessions to Russia as part of a peace deal, saying that trading land is forbidden by the country's constitution.

Earlier this month, Trump expressed frustration over Zelensky's attempts to use the Ukrainian constitution as an excuse to avoid making compromises. The US president said that he was *“a little bothered by the fact that Zelensky was saying, well, I have to get constitutional approval... I mean, he has got approval to go into war and kill everybody, but he needs approval to do a land swap.”*

During the press-conference with Zelensky, Von der Leyen insisted that *“Ukraine must become a steel porcupine, indigestible to potential invaders,”* repeating a metaphor that she has used before. She promised that the EU would keep working to strengthen the Ukrainian defense industry, especially when it comes to drone production.

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The European Commission head claimed that decisions regarding territory *“belong only to*

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Ukraine, and cannot be taken without Ukraine at the table." The EU will continue trying to apply diplomatic and economic pressure on Russia, with its 19th sanctions package against Moscow currently in preparation, Von der Leyen said.

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I'd like to know how many peace treaties in history were preceded by ceasefire. That would open