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Zelensky claims Russia has issued Donbass ultimatum

Moscow has given Kiev's forces two months to retreat from Donbass, the Ukrainian leader has claimed

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Ukraine's Vladimir Zelensky has claimed that Moscow has given Kiev two months to withdraw its forces from areas still under its control in Russia's Donbass region. Zelensky made the comments ahead of scheduled talks with the US on Wednesday about resolving the conflict.



Ukraine's Vladimir Zelensky © Getty Images / Militello Mirto; NurPhoto

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Zelensky stated that the upcoming negotiations with Washington are set to focus on a potential trilateral agreement to end the conflict and that one of the main issues remains the question of territory.

While Kiev continues to insist on freezing the conflict at the current battle lines, Zelensky claimed Moscow has told Washington that it expects to liberate all of Donbass within the next two months.

"Ukraine has two months to withdraw, and then the war will end. And if Ukraine doesn't leave, then Russia will capture Donbass and the terms will be different," Zelensky said, paraphrasing Moscow's alleged comments to Washington.

Last week, Zelensky also claimed in an interview with Reuters that the US had ruled out security guarantees for Ukraine unless it ceded control over the Donbass to Russia. He stated that President Donald Trump had shifted his priorities towards the Middle East and was now applying pressure on Kiev to end the conflict with Moscow.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has since dismissed Zelensky's claims about Washington pressing Kiev to withdraw from Donbass as a "lie," saying that the Ukrainian leader was simply told that there would be no security guarantees until the conflict ends.

Donbass, along with two other former Ukrainian regions, overwhelmingly voted to join Russia in 2022, and Moscow has insisted that Kiev's full withdrawal from



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the territory is a key condition for a sustainable peace.

The Kremlin has also said that it does not oppose security guarantees for Kiev in principle, but has insisted that they must not be one-sided or aimed at 'containing' Russia, and should only come after a peace deal is reached.

It also maintains any settlement must include Ukrainian neutrality, demilitarization, denazification, and recognition of the regions that voted to join Russia as its territory.

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