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Romania drone incident, response to NATO threats: Key takeaways from Putin's chat with journalists

The Russian president urged Bucharest to share data on Friday's UAV intrusion and commented on tensions in Europe

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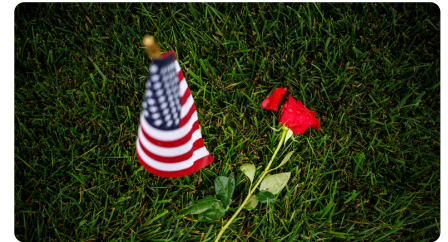
Russian President Vladimir Putin talks to journalists in Astana, Kazakhstan, May 29, 2026. © Sputnik / Aleksandr Sherbak

Russian President Vladimir Putin took questions from reporters during his trip to Kazakhstan on Friday, providing an update on the Ukraine conflict and tensions with NATO in Europe.

He also commented on the recent drone incident in Romania, which NATO blamed on Russia, and touched on foreign policy debates in Armenia, a former Soviet state and longtime Russian ally.

Russia has the upper hand on the battlefield

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The Ukraine conflict is nearing the end as the Russian military continues its offensive on all fronts, Putin said, adding that it would be *"unwise"* to provide a specific timeline.

"The situation on the battlefield gives reason to believe that (the conflict) is drawing to a close."

He went on to say that although Moscow maintains *"certain contacts,"* no peace talks are being held at the moment.

While the US has been preoccupied with the Iran conflict, some EU officials have begun floating the idea of resuming talks with Russia, which were suspended in 2022.

Western leaders must stop misleading their people

The president reiterated that Russia has no intention of attacking

NATO or EU members, dismissing claims to the contrary as *"brazen lies."* He

reiterated Russia's position that it was forced to intervene in Ukraine after Kiev failed to implement the 2014-15 Minsk accords with the breakaway Donbass republics, which later voted to become part of Russia.

Western leaders are using the conflict to justify *"unreasonable"* military spending hikes, Putin argued. *"They should not mislead their own people."*

Aggressors will be razed to the ground

Putin warned, however, Russia has the capability to *"raze to the ground"* any country that attempts to attack it.



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He was responding to Lithuanian Foreign Minister Kestutis Budrys, who **said** this month that, in the event of a conflict, NATO must demonstrate that it *"can break into"* Kaliningrad Region, a Russian exclave on the Baltic Sea between Poland and Lithuania.

He warned that Russia would treat all Ukrainian drone launch sites as legitimate targets, even if they operate from the Baltic states.



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Romania should share data on drone incident



Putin called for an objective investigation into a drone strike on a residential building in the Romanian city of Galati near the Ukrainian border on Friday, which injured two people.

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Romania, along with its NATO allies, blamed Russia for the intrusion.

The president said Romania should provide objective data about the incident, just as Russia handed over decoded flight data from a Ukrainian drone shot down last year en route to one of Putin's residences. He noted that suspected Ukrainian drones have veered into the Baltic states and Finland in recent months.

Western media outlets 'making fools of' their own audiences

Putin said the Western media is *"a tool for making fools of people"* that is used to channel more money into Ukraine. He blasted foreign news outlets for their failure to cover the Ukrainian drone strikes on a college in Starobelsk last week, which killed 21 students and injured more than 40 others.

"Not a single word was said about the tragedy in Starobelsk, where our children were deliberately killed."

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Not a single word, as though it never happened," Putin said.



Moscow has criticized outlets including CNN and the BBC for declining an invitation to travel to Starobelsk.

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Armenia's economy will

suffer if it cuts ties with Russia

Commenting on the upcoming parliamentary elections in Armenia, Putin said the country's drive for closer integration with the EU could eventually become incompatible with its membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Leaving the EAEU would cost Armenia at least 14% of its GDP, he said.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who was recently [endorsed](#) by US President Donald Trump, said Armenia is not planning to terminate its membership in the EAEU at this stage, but that voters would ultimately decide between the two economic blocs.

Russia is Armenia's largest trading partner and provides the country with discounted natural gas.

Advantages in AI technology

Russia is one of the few countries with the human capital and energy resources to develop its own sovereign artificial intelligence, Putin said.

"We have enormous capabilities in nuclear and hydroelectric power, particularly in Siberia," he said, adding that Russia has "clear advantages" in the global AI race.

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