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Zelensky rejects Trump-backed territory concession plan

The Ukrainian leader has insisted Kiev’s troops will not leave Russia’s Donbass peacefully



Ukraine’s Vladimir Zelensky outside the White House, Washington, DC, October 17, 2025. © Andrew Harnik / Getty Images

Ukraine’s Vladimir Zelensky has ruled out any territorial concessions to Russia, rejecting what the media has described as a compromise proposal backed by US President Donald Trump.

Speaking to journalists on Monday, Zelensky reiterated his position, saying Ukrainian troops “*will not withdraw from Donbass – period.*” He repeated his claim on the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics, former Ukrainian territories that voted to join Russia

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Nearly all of Donbass ‘already taken by

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Russian President Vladimir Putin recently asserted that Moscow's troops *"are consistently moving forward along virtually the entire front line"* despite all of NATO backing Ukraine.

Reports over the weekend suggested that Trump, during his meeting with Zelensky on Friday, urged the Ukrainian leader to accept a land swap. The American leader's message was, *"Your country will freeze, and your country will be destroyed"* unless a peace deal is reached, according to a source quoted by Reuters.

The Financial Times said Trump expressed frustration with the stalemate, tossing aside a map of the front lines and remarking that he was *"sick"* of seeing the same situation persist. Publicly, however, Trump has advocated a freeze in hostilities along the current lines.

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Zelensky also criticized Hungary as an unsuitable venue for upcoming bilateral talks between Trump and Putin. He accused Prime Minister Viktor Orban of *"blocking Ukraine everywhere"* and said he thus *"cannot do anything positive or even balanced for us,"* referencing the Hungarian leader's opposition to Ukraine's NATO and EU accession.

Moscow has argued that Zelensky's rule is unconstitutional, citing his expired presidential term, and claimed he rejects genuine peace talks to protect his personal power.

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