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Zelensky rules out territorial concessions to Russia

Ukraine wants to return the areas it claims through diplomacy should military means fail, the country's leader has said



© Getty Images / PA / Kay Nietfeld

Ukraine will never recognize the incorporation of its former territories into Russia and wants them back through either military or diplomatic means, the country's leader, Vladimir Zelensky, has said.

Zelensky made the remarks in an interview with Axios aired on Friday, shortly before he departed the UN General Assembly in New York. The Ukrainian leader reiterated his longstanding position that Kiev would never recognize the loss of territory to Russia.

"We will never recognize these territories that are temporarily occupied by Russia. We cannot do this," he stated.

Opting for diplomacy to get the territories back instead of sticking to purely military means is regarded as a good "compromise" by the Ukrainian leader.

"If we don't have power to bring back these territories, so we are ready to speak about it. We are ready to get it back sometime in

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the future by diplomatic way, not with weapon. And I think this is a good compromise for everybody, is that we have to decide such things now in dialogue and less losses," Zelensky stated.

Ukraine lays claims to the Donetsk (DPR) and Lugansk People's Republics (LPR), Kherson and Zaporozhye regions, as well as the Crimean peninsula. Moscow has repeatedly signaled the status of its new territories is not negotiable and regards them as an integral part of Russia.



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Crimea broke away from Ukraine in early 2014 in the aftermath of a Western-backed coup in Kiev that toppled the country's then president, Viktor Yanukovich, and ultimately triggered a conflict in Donbass. Crimea subsequently joined Russia via a referendum.

The four other regions joined Russia in late 2022 following a series of referendums during which the idea was overwhelmingly backed by locals. While the Russian military has liberated the entirety of the LPR territory, Moscow's control over other former Ukrainian regions remains partial.

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R Randal Walker 9/26/2025 at 7:51 PM 0

He doesn't really want to end the conflict.

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Jana Dixon 9/26/2025 at 7:51 PM 0

Zelensky's job was to weaken Russia, but he has just made her and BRICs stronger.

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Sun Risings 9/26/2025 at 7:48 PM 0

Perfect. That's the same 'proud' attitude that has moved more and more regions of the Ukraine to join Russia again, forever.

Don't stop, please. That's the spirit! LoL.

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Nelson 9/26/2025 at 7:46 PM 1

He wouldn't even recognize himself in a mirror

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Fred Kreyen 9/26/2025 at 7:06 PM 1

The Ukrainian leader reiterated his longstanding position that Kiev would never recognize the loss of territory to Russia.

BUT.. the question if Kiev is still representing the Ukrainian people – the ones doing the fighting and dying...

Secondly – those in the several territories don't want to return under the Kiev regime...

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J Jon Reeves 9/26/2025 at 7:45 PM -2

Fred, any traitors are free to move to Siberia. Zelensky is a Russian speaker but he doesn't hide in a bunker like little Putin. Russians are weak sauce.

[Reply](#)

9/26/2025 at 7:07 PM