

## Kremlin Says Open to Peace Talks With Zelensky, But Needs More Clarity

July 25, 2024



Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov. Sergei Bulkin / TASS

The Kremlin<u>said</u> Thursday that it was still open to negotiations with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky despite Moscow's questions about his legitimacy as leader.

"Russia is generally open to the negotiation process, but we first need to understand if the Ukrainian side is ready," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"From a practical point of view, we're open to achieving our goals through negotiations," Peskov added, referring to the Kremlin's demands for Ukraine to give up four regions partially occupied by Russian troops and drop its ambitions to join NATO.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Wednesday while visiting China that Kyiv was prepared to negotiate with Moscow when it shows "good faith."

"[Kuleba] stressed that currently there is no such readiness on the Russian side," the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

## Related article: Russian Drones Attack Ukrainian Port City for Second Night in a Row

Peskov on Thursday also raised what he described as the "legal problem" of Zelensky's presidential mandate, which expired after five years in office this May. Zelensky and Ukraine's Western allies say that peacetime political rules do not apply at a time of war.

"In addition to the general problem with Zelensky's legitimacy, there's also a problem with the actual legal prohibition of any contacts and negotiations with the Russian side," Peskov said, characterizing the Ukrainian leader as a U.S. puppet.

"So there's still a lot to be clarified here," the Kremlin spokesman added, leaving the prospects of Russian-Ukrainian talks in the air amid international efforts to reach a negotiated ceasefire.

## Original url:

https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/07/25/kremlin-says-open-to-peace-talks-with-zelensky-but-needs-more-clarity-a85825