

Russia's War Against Ukraine: Ceasefire Talks and Related Issues

March 26, 2025

Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. More than three years later, Russia and Ukraine remain engaged in Europe's largest war in scope and scale since World War II. With [estimates](#) of over 1 million killed or wounded, and with Russia in control of about 20% of Ukraine's territory, neither side currently appears poised to achieve a decisive military victory.

Since taking office in January 2025, President Trump has made efforts to facilitate an end to the Russia-Ukraine war, which he has characterized as a "[horrific and brutal conflict](#)" that "[should have never started](#)." President Trump and other Administration officials have held bilateral talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, and other Russian and Ukrainian officials. To date, the process has moved forward on parallel bilateral tracks, with U.S. officials conducting separate talks with Russian and Ukrainian officials. Members of Congress may evaluate the costs and benefits of, and prospects for, U.S. mediation between Russia and Ukraine, including implications for U.S. strategic interests.

Potential Ceasefire Terms

An initial issue in U.S.-facilitated discussions has been the terms of a potential ceasefire. Ukrainian officials and some [observers](#) have cautioned that Russia might use a ceasefire to prepare for a resumption of hostilities, while Russian officials have [expressed](#) a reluctance to agree to a full ceasefire without certain conditions, including securing [broader](#) constraints on Ukraine's military.

After a March 11, 2025, bilateral meeting, U.S. and Ukrainian officials issued a [joint statement](#) noting, among other things, that Ukraine was prepared "to accept [a] U.S. proposal to enact an immediate, interim 30-day ceasefire." National Security Advisor Michael Waltz [stated](#) the proposal was "for a full ceasefire." [According](#) to President Zelensky, the proposal for a ceasefire was "not only with regard to missiles, drones and bombs ... but also along the entire frontline."

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Figure I. Ukraine

Source: CRS, using data from the Institute for the Study of War and the American Enterprise Institute Critical Threats Project, Global Administrative Areas, and ESRI.

After a March 18 phone call between President Trump and President Putin, the U.S. and Russian governments issued separate readouts. The White House [stated](#) the two presidents “agreed that the movement to peace will begin with an energy *and* infrastructure ceasefire [emphasis added], as well as technical negotiations on implementation of a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea, full ceasefire and permanent peace.” An official Russian readout [stated](#) that President Putin raised several issues that would need to be addressed in connection with a full ceasefire but that he “[responded positively](#)” to a proposal President Trump “put forward ... for the parties to the conflict to mutually refrain from attacks on *energy infrastructure* facilities for 30 days.” Subsequently, on March 25, the White House [stated](#) both [parties](#) agreed to a ceasefire in the Black Sea and a “ban [on] strikes against energy facilities.”

Other Aspects of Negotiations

Potential future negotiations might address a number of additional issues, including the following:

- **The Status of Russian-Occupied Ukrainian Territory.** Ukraine lays claim to all its internationally recognized territory (including territory Russia has occupied since 2022 and also 2014, when Russia first invaded Ukraine and occupied the Crimea region and portions of eastern Ukraine). The Russian government claims to have [annexed](#) most of the territory it currently occupies, as well as some cities and areas not under Russian control. [President Trump](#) and [other Administration](#) officials have suggested that territorial control could be a subject of negotiations.
- **Security Assistance to Ukraine.** U.S. officials [said](#) on March 3, 2025, that security assistance to Ukraine was being paused and reviewed “to ensure that it is contributing to a solution” and subsequently announced a pause in intelligence sharing. The March 11,

2025, U.S.-Ukraine [joint statement](#) said the United States would “immediately lift the pause on intelligence sharing and resume security assistance to Ukraine.” The Russian readout of the Trump-Putin March 18 phone call stated that “the complete cessation of foreign military assistance and intelligence support” to Ukraine is a “key condition for preventing escalation of the conflict and working towards its resolution.” The Trump Administration and Congress may assess whether and on what terms to provide continued [support](#) to Ukraine alongside U.S. allies.

- **Other Defense and Security Issues.** Ukrainian officials have sought security assurances against further Russian aggression, including, for example, the deployment of Western peacekeeping forces and closer integration with NATO and the European Union. Ukraine also has [rejected](#) Russian calls for limits on its armed forces. Russian officials have signaled a preference to include broader [strategic issues](#) in negotiations (including guarantees against NATO membership for Ukraine and other issues Russian President Putin has [referred](#) to as “root causes” of the conflict). [President Trump](#) and other Administration [officials](#) have expressed the view that NATO membership for Ukraine is unrealistic.

Other issues that could be raised in or alongside negotiations include the following:

- The status of prisoners of war and other detainees, Ukrainian children who have been [removed](#) to Russia, Ukrainians living under Russian occupation, and refugees and internally displaced persons.
- Sanctions and related measures against Russia, including the status of immobilized Russian [sovereign assets](#).
- Ukraine reconstruction.
- War crimes accountability.

In addition, issues related to sequencing and confidence building may affect the [prospects](#) for concluding a sustainable agreement. Both Ukraine and Russia may have concerns about ensuring compliance with any agreement and could seek U.S., European, or other international commitments in this regard.

Potential Considerations for Congress

Members of Congress may assess the costs and benefits of potential outcomes of U.S.-mediated negotiations and the likelihood of a sustainable peace agreement. Members also may evaluate the potential impact of negotiations on other U.S. policy interests, including relations with NATO allies and strategic challenges posed by China.

Congress may authorize, appropriate, restrict, or conduct oversight on further assistance to Ukraine, including with regard to potential reconstruction efforts (from FY2022 to FY2024, Congress enacted five supplemental appropriations measures providing [assistance](#) to Ukraine). Members of Congress also may consider whether to maintain, strengthen, or lift [sanctions](#) on Russia by using existing legislation or introducing new legislation.

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