



Vladimir Putin's conditions include granting Russia control over areas in Ukraine that Moscow has never occupied during its two-year invasion © Russian Defense Ministry Press Service/AP

Max Seddon in Riga, Christopher Miller in Kyiv and Polina Ivanova in Berlin 5 HOURS AGO



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Vladimir Putin has said Russia will immediately cease fire and begin negotiations to end the war in Ukraine in exchange for control of four frontline Ukrainian regions, a proposal immediately rejected by Kyiv.

The Russian president's conditions include areas Moscow has never occupied during its [two-year invasion](#) or from which it subsequently withdrew, as well as a pledge for Ukraine to never join Nato. Putin also seeks the lifting of western sanctions imposed in 2022 in response to his full-scale invasion.

Ukraine said [Putin's](#) proposal amounted to capitulation and would leave the country vulnerable to future attacks.

"New territorial realities must be recognised," Putin said in a speech to foreign policy officials on Friday. "All these basic principal conditions must be set through fundamental international agreements. Naturally, this involves the cancellation of all western sanctions against Russia."

Under Putin's conditions, Russia would gain full control of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia. Putin claimed to have annexed the regions despite only partly occupying them in the autumn of 2022.

Fighting has raged in all four regions in recent months, with Russian forces slowly seizing the initiative on the battlefield after Ukraine's failed counteroffensive last year and a six-month delay in US military assistance that allowed Moscow to make further gains.

Putin demanded that Ukraine pledge to no longer seek Nato membership, a goal enshrined in the Ukrainian constitution and confirmed by the US-led military alliance though without a concrete timeline.

ordered the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. He made clear he would set out a maximalist position in any peace talks and fight on indefinitely if they were not met.

“Today we are making another specific, real peace offering. If Kyiv and western capitals refuse it as they did before, then that’s their issue at the end of the day — their political and moral responsibility for the continued bloodshed,” Putin said.

“Obviously, the facts on the ground at the front will continue to change, not in the Kyiv regime’s favour, and the conditions to begin negotiations will be different.”

Putin’s demands suggested the Kremlin was confident about the invasion’s progress, said Alexander Gabuev, director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center in Berlin. “This sets the threshold for what the Russians want,” he said, adding that while Moscow could probably make some concessions, “the key demand here is no military co-operation between Ukraine and the west”.

Moscow withdrew from some of the areas in southeastern Ukraine it said it annexed after an unrecognised referendum in 2022, including from Kherson, the only provincial capital it captured during the early phase of its full-scale invasion.

Russia has never controlled the city of Zaporizhzhia, which had a prewar population of more than 700,000 and has since become home to many refugees from Russian-controlled areas.

Oleksandr Lytvynenko, secretary of Ukraine’s national security and defence council, told the Financial Times that Putin’s remarks were a “demonstration that he doesn’t want to negotiate” and that the Russian leader’s terms were unacceptable to Kyiv.

Lytvynenko said Putin was speaking out now because “he is afraid” that a peace summit spearheaded by Kyiv, which starts in Switzerland on Saturday, would be successful.

Leaders and representatives from more than 90 countries will gather at the Swiss resort of Bürgenstock, where President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is set to appeal to nations that have been indifferent to his nation’s plight.

“Our position is very clear: the peace formula,” Lytvynenko said, referring to Zelenskyy’s 10-point plan to bring the war to an end, which includes the full withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian territory.

Russia was not invited to the peace summit but Andriy Yermak, Zelenskyy’s chief of staff, told the FT that Kyiv might invite a Moscow representative to a second peace summit sometime in the future.

Gabuev said Putin’s comments were likely to help his partners strengthen their position in future talks — particularly China, which has a competing peace plan that is aligned with the Kremlin. Chinese officials have refused to join the summit in Switzerland because Putin was not invited.

The Russian president’s allies were likely to describe the Swiss summit as “poorly prepared talks based on unrealistic expectations”, prompting them to offer their own “framework to bring the parties together”, said Gabuev.