

## War in Ukraine

# Trump steps up criticism of Putin over continuing attacks on Ukraine

Secretary of state says US will decide this week whether to withdraw from negotiations



Donald Trump, left, and Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a discussion on the sidelines of Pope Francis's funeral in the Vatican on Saturday  
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**Myles McCormick** in Washington

Published YESTERDAY

Donald Trump expressed mounting frustration with Russia over its continued attacks on Ukraine but asserted that a deal to end the war remained within reach.

The US president on Sunday evening reiterated his criticism of Vladimir Putin over Moscow's persistent air strikes on [Ukraine](#), as Washington grows impatient amid faltering efforts to broker a peace deal.

"I was very disappointed that missiles were [launched] by Russia," Trump told reporters as he travelled back to the White House. "I want [Putin] to stop shooting, sit down and sign a deal."

The comments come as Washington looks to turn up the pressure on both sides to agree a ceasefire, and a day after Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy [had a "productive discussion"](#) on the sidelines of Pope Francis's funeral in the Vatican.

Trump said the encounter — the first since February's Oval Office blowout — had been a "beautiful meeting" and praised Zelenskyy for "doing a good job", adding: "I see him as calmer. I think he understands the picture, and I think he wants to make a

see him as cancer. I think he understands the picture, and I think he wants to make a deal.”

Russia last week launched its deadliest strike of the year on Kyiv, killing 12 civilians and wounding 90 more. Following the attack Trump took to his Truth Social platform to offer a [rare rebuke of his Russian counterpart](#). “Vladimir, STOP!” he wrote, branding the attack “unnecessary”.

In an interview aired on US television on Sunday, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov insisted [Russia](#) would not pull back on its strikes.

“We will continue to target the sites used by the military of Ukraine, by some mercenaries from foreign countries and by instructors whom the Europeans officially sent to help target Russian civilian sites,” Lavrov told CBS’s *Face the Nation* show in a pre-recorded interview.

Zelenskyy said on Sunday that the continuing Russian strikes — including almost 70 by midday alone — made clear that “more tangible pressure on Russia is needed to create more opportunities for real diplomacy”.

He wrote on X: “The situation on the frontline and the real activity of the Russian army prove that the current global pressure on Russia is insufficient to bring this war to an end.”

Trump’s special envoy Steve Witkoff [met Putin last week](#) for what the Kremlin described as a “constructive” meeting.

But senior administration officials indicated Washington was growing increasingly impatient and was willing to walk away from the peace talks if a deal was not reached quickly.

“It needs to happen soon,” US secretary of state Marco Rubio told NBC’s *Meet the Press* on Sunday. “We cannot continue to dedicate time and resources to this effort if it’s not going to come to fruition.”

He said that this week the US would be likely to make a “determination about whether this is an endeavour in which we want to continue to be involved in or whether it’s time to focus on some other issues”.

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