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Ukraine welcomes Trump's claimed pause in Russian attacks, but Moscow silent

(Snow covers the Orthodox Monastery of Caves in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Monday, January 26, amid regular Russian air attacks against the country's energy sector that leave people without power, heating and water. Efreem Lukatsky/AP)

US President Donald Trump claimed his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin agreed to a week-long pause in attacks on major Ukrainian cities, including the capital, Kyiv, as the country grapples with plummeting winter temperatures.



Trump made the claim, which has not been confirmed by Russia, during a Cabinet meeting at the White House on Thursday.

"I personally asked President (Vladimir) Putin not to fire into Kyiv and the various towns for a week, and he agreed to do that," Trump said during the meeting, citing the "extreme cold" Ukraine is facing.

Trump did not say when the conversation with Putin took place, but his comment comes as Russia has stepped up attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, leaving large parts of the country facing power shortages and outages.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky thanked Trump and said a possible temporary halt in attacks during the extreme winter period could help protect Ukraine's critical energy infrastructure, calling power supply "a foundation of life."



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A woman stands among the debris at the Holy Dormition Male Monastery damaged by a Russian drone attack in Odesa, Ukraine, on Wednesday, January 28. Nina Liashonok/NURPHO/AP

“We value the efforts of our partners to help us protect lives. Thank you, President Trump,” Zelensky said in a post on X, adding that Ukraine expects the agreement to be implemented.

Zelensky confirmed that discussions about a temporary halt in attacks on energy infrastructure took place during [trilateral meetings](#) between US, Ukrainian and Russian officials in Abu Dhabi last week.

A person familiar with the discussions said American officials raised the idea of such a pause in fighting, though it wasn't clear at the time whether Moscow would agree.

Russia has not publicly confirmed that it has accepted any proposed halt in attacks. Asked earlier on Thursday about a possible energy ceasefire, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov offered no clarification, “No, I can't comment on that yet.” CNN has reached out to the Kremlin for further comment.

Previous attempts at a temporary truce between Russia and Ukraine have all failed to hold. Ukraine accused Russia of violating a planned three-day ceasefire [in May of last year](#), which Moscow announced it would hold for “humanitarian considerations.” While Russian state media said that the ceasefire went into effect, Ukraine's military said attacks continued throughout the period. But the Russian Ministry of Defense claimed its troops “ceased all hostilities” and accused Ukraine of continuing to strike. It said Russia would “mirror” Ukraine's actions.

And earlier in the war, Ukrainian authorities had to put plans to evacuate civilians from Mariupol on hold, citing [Russian violations](#) of an agreed pause in March 2022.



Status of peace talks

In his post thanking Trump, Zelensky said such “de-escalation steps contribute to real progress toward ending the war.” And Trump’s Special Envoy Steve Witkoff expressed similar optimism, saying on Thursday that the administration was “making a lot of progress” in negotiating a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine, adding that following the Abu Dhabi meeting he believes “the people of Ukraine are now hopeful and expectant that we’re going to deliver a peace deal sometime soon.”

On Wednesday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the “territorial claim on Donetsk” is the key remaining issue in talks to end the war in Ukraine.

“It’s still a gap, but at least we’ve been able to narrow down the issue set to one central one, and it will probably be a very difficult one, but nonetheless, it’s one that work is going on,” he told lawmakers.

But on Thursday, Kremlin aide Yury Ushakov tempered Rubio’s assessment of where negotiations stand. “I think not,” Ushakov told Rossiya-1 TV in response to Rubio’s remarks, Russian state outlet TASS said. Earlier, Ushakov told Russian media that territory was the biggest of many issues still on the agenda, according to TASS.

The reported pause in Russian attacks comes at a critical time, when Ukraine is facing below freezing temperatures, made worse by repeated Russian attacks on critical infrastructure.

Russian strikes on energy infrastructure have caused significant electricity shortages in Kyiv, according to the country’s energy minister, with multiple other regions including Odesa, Kharkiv and Donetsk also suffering outages.

Sebastian Shukla, Daria Tarasova-Markina, Jennifer Hansler and Moriah Thomas contributed to this report.



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