
Russia demands Ukrainian withdrawal before ceasefire talks



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In the first direct negotiations since March 2022, held in Istanbul, Russian officials demanded that Ukraine withdraw its troops from the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions as a precondition for any ceasefire agreement. These regions, claimed by Russia but not fully controlled, remain central to the ongoing conflict.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy rejected these demands, describing them as ultimatums and equating them to historical acts of aggression. He emphasized that Ukraine would not concede its territories or abandon its aspirations to join NATO.

Despite the diplomatic stalemate, both sides agreed to a significant prisoner exchange, with 1,000 detainees to be swapped on each side. However, no specific timeline was established for the exchange.

The international community remains divided over the situation. While some European leaders call for increased sanctions against Russia, others express concern over the effectiveness of such measures. Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump announced plans to engage directly with both President Putin and President Zelenskyy in an effort to mediate the conflict.

As the situation continues to unfold, the path to peace remains uncertain, with both nations holding firm to their respective positions. The global community watches closely as diplomatic efforts continue to find common ground for lasting peace.