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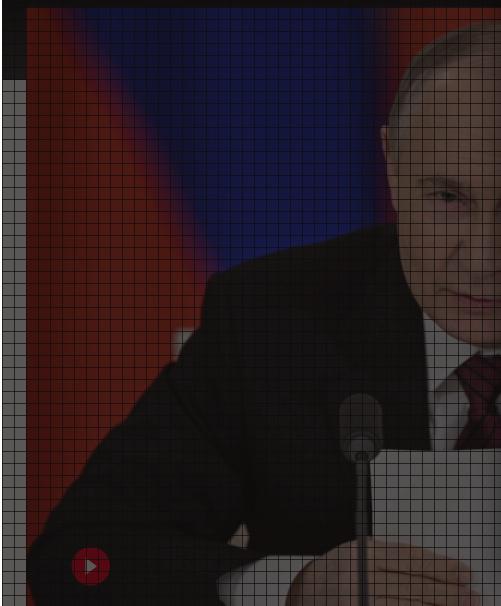
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WORLD NEWS

## Russia's Putin proposes direct talks with Ukraine in Istanbul on May 15, 'without preconditions'



1 of 7 | Putin's offer came in response to Ukraine and its allies urging Moscow to commit to an unconditional 30-day ceasefire. The leaders of France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Poland said their proposal for a ceasefire to start on Monday was supported by U.S. President Donald

BY SAMYA KULLAB AND JOANNA KOZLOWSKA

Updated 6:26 PM PDT, May 10, 2025

Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed restarting direct talks with Ukraine "without preconditions," an offer that came in response to a demand that Moscow commit to an unconditional 30-day ceasefire or face additional

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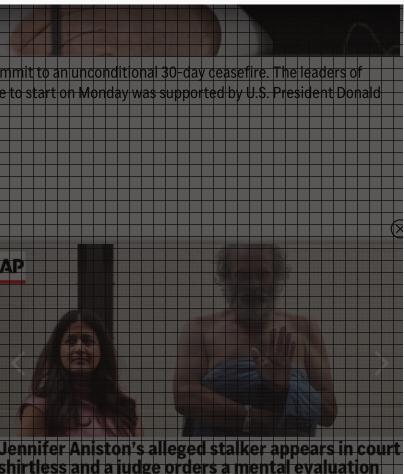
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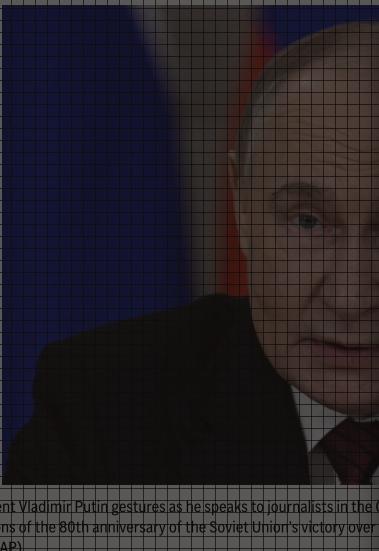
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"We are committed  
agreeing to a ceas

Putin's proposal came after he threatened to increase  
pressure on Moscow if it does not accept an unconditional 30-day ceasefire in Ukraine that they offered  
on Saturday in a strong show of unity with Kyiv.



Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures as he speaks to journalists in the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, on May 9, 2015, after celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. (AP Photo/Ria Novosti via AP)

1 shortly after  
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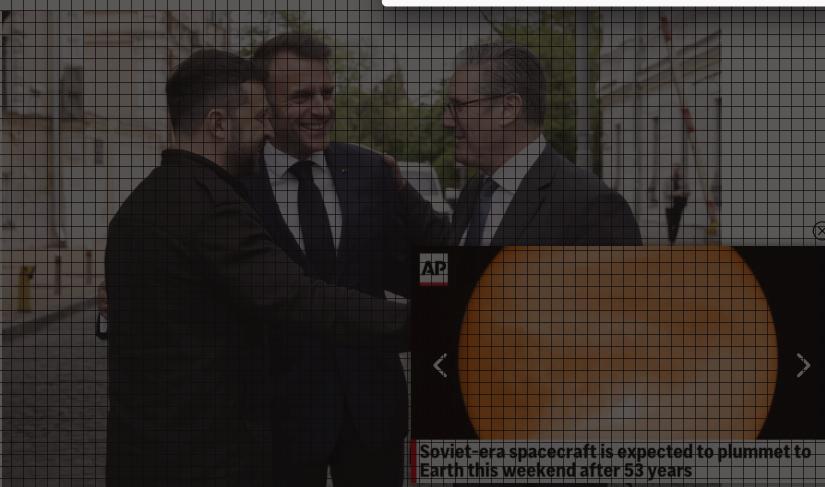
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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, and French President Emmanuel Macron, center, talk over the phone during a meeting in Kyiv.



The leaders of France and Ukraine will start on Monday what they had planned earlier in the day.

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Emmanuel Macron, center, talks over the phone with Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, president of Ukraine.

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For a ceasefire to end the conflict, France's president Emmanuel Macron, right, and Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, agreed over the phone on Sunday.

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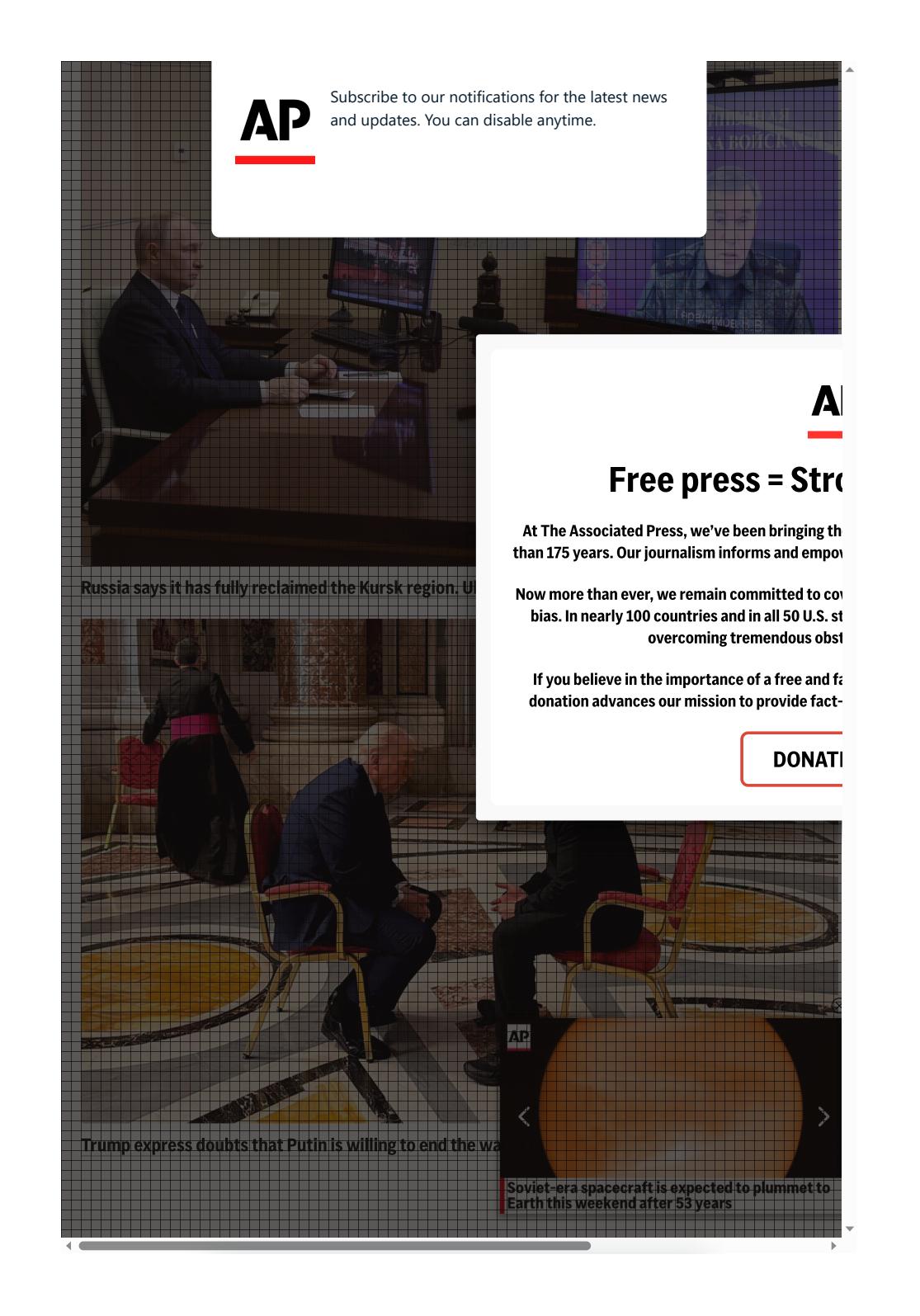
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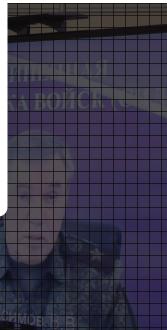
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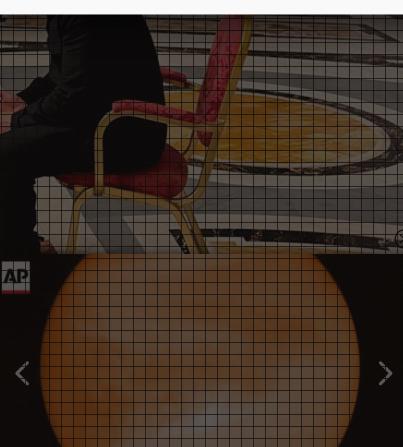
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Russia says it has fully reclaimed the Kursk region. Ukraine says no.



Trump expresses doubts that Putin is willing to end the war.



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Trump has called "a deal" on ending Ukraine's President a ceasefire is in place

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are "very close to

talks, but only after

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## Moscow's proposals

Putin said that Russia proposed several ceasefires in recent weeks, including one for infrastructure, which Ukraine had agreed to, a unilateral ceasefire on May 8-10 that has since expired.

Ukrainian officials said Russia repeatedly violated all of them.

Putin on Sunday accused Ukraine of sabotaging "these peace talks" by launching multiple attacks on Russia.

In March, the United States proposed an immediate, limited 30-day truce, which Ukraine accepted, but the Kremlin has held out for [terms more to its liking](#).

Putin on Sunday once again said the Kremlin needs a truce that would lead to a "lasting peace" instead of one that would allow Ukraine to rearm and mobilize more men into its armed forces.

He said he would speak to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and ask him to facilitate the peace talks on May 15.

Shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, the two sides began a series of talks between Russian and Ukrainian negotiators aimed at ending the war. The negotiations reportedly included provisions for Ukraine's neutral status and the status of its territories under Russian control, while delaying talks on the status of Russian-occupied areas.

Moscow has blamed Kyiv and the West for the talks collapsing.

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Putin said that "those who truly want peace cannot bu



Russian President Vladimir Putin enters a hall to meet South Ossetian President Alani Gagloyev in the Grand Palace at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, on Saturday, May 10, 2025, during celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany during the World War II. (Sergei Bobylev/RIA Novosti via AP)

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## 'A very important signal'

Zelenskyy, speaking to reporters alongside the European Union foreign policy chief, said he was "very pleased" by the meeting "a very important signal."

In a joint statement, as published on Zelenskyy's official website, the two leaders agreed to a "ceasefire" "lasting at least 30 days" from Monday, to make room for a peace conference.

"An unconditional ceasefire by definition cannot be subject to certain conditions," Zelenskyy said. "Under such conditions, this can only be considered as an effort to prolong the war and undermine diplomacy," the president added.

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French President Emmanuel Macron traveled to Warsaw on Saturday to meet with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki.



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Macron traveled to Warsaw on Saturday to meet with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki.

"This is Europe stepping up, showing our solidarity with Ukraine," Macron said.

Retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, Trump's special envoy to Ukraine, said Saturday that a "comprehensive" 30-day ceasefire, covering attacks from the air, land, sea and on infrastructure, "will start the process for ending the largest and longest war in Europe since World War II."



Meanwhile, Putin on Saturday held a series of bilateral meetings in Moscow, including talks with the president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko; the leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, Denis Pushilin; the leader of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic, Igor Plotnitsky; and the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Nguyen Phu Trong. He also met with the head of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmud Abbas.

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France's President Emmanuel Macron, left, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, center, and others attend a summit at the Mariinsky Palace in Kyiv, Ukraine, Saturday, May 10, 2025. (Ukrainian Presidential Press Office via AP)

## Europe threatens more sanctions if Russia doesn't end war

Progress on ending the three-year war has seemed elusive. U.S. President Joe Biden, his administration's top diplomat, and his previous claims of imminent breakthroughs have been dashed. Biden has previously pushed Ukraine to cede territory to Russia, but the deal becomes too difficult.

Since the start of U.S.-mediated talks, Russia has kept its forces on the front line, including deadly strikes on residential areas.

The ceasefire would include a halt to fighting on land, sea and in the air. The two sides threatened to ratchet up sanctions, including on Russia's energy and banking sectors, if Putin did not comply.

The priority was to make it too costly for Russia to keep fighting in Ukraine, said Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha.

When asked how the monitoring mechanism would work, Sybiha told The Associated Press the details were still being discussed.

Addressing skepticism over whether fresh sanctions against Russia would stop the fighting in the war, Merz said "almost all member states of the European Union and the willing around the world are determined to enforce them." He added: "If they weekend should fail."

The leaders also discussed security guarantees for Ukraine.

Building up Kyiv's military capabilities will be a key deterrent, Sybiha said. The government is sending Ukraine with robust quantities of arms to deter future attacks and investing in its defense sector. A force

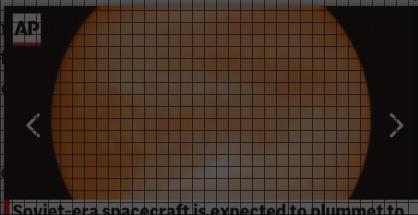
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He said details about the  
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Earlier on Saturday, Ukraine  
80th anniversary of its independence  
[memorial](#) for fallen



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## Russian attacks continue

Russian shelling in Ukraine's northern Sumy region over the weekend killed four more, local officials said. Another civilian died Saturday in the city of Kherson, according to regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokopenko.

The U.S. Embassy in Kyiv on Friday warned of a "potentially dangerous situation" in the days, without giving details.

Russia in November gave the U.S. brief advance warning of its [Oreshnik intermediate-range ballistic missile](#), an experimental missile that could travel at 10 times the speed of sound.

Ukrainian Telegram channels linked the embassy's warning to Moscow over the Kapustin Yar military training and rocket testing center to November's strike. There was no immediate comment from Russia.

Trump said last week that he doubts Putin wants to end the war, but that a peace deal can be reached soon, and [hinted at further negotiations](#).

Ukraine's European allies view its fate as fundamental to their security and are mounting to find ways to support Kyiv militarily, regardless of what happens in the talks.



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Kullab reported from Kyiv, Ukraine. Kozlowska reported from London. Associated Press writers Thomas Hargrove in New York, Daniel Zuhouth in The Hague, Michael R. Gordon in Washington, and Adamson in Paris, Philipp Reissfelder in Berlin and Danica Kirka in London contributed to this report.

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**SAMYA KULLAB**

Kullab is an Associated Press reporter covering Ukraine since January 2014, and the wider Middle East from her base in Baghdad since joining AP in 2011.



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