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'We need to end war ASAP' – Zelensky

Ukraine would like the conflict with Russia to stop by the end of the year, Vladimir Zelensky has suggested



Vladimir Zelensky (L) greets Vatican's Secretary of State Pietro Parolin in Kiev © UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SERVICE/AFP

Ukraine would like the fighting with Russia to end as quickly as possible to stop the loss of life, Vladimir Zelensky has said.

The Ukrainian leader was speaking with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's secretary of state visiting Kiev. Zelensky thanked the Holy See for a "strong signal" of support to Ukraine.

"I think all of us understand that we have to finish the war, as soon as possible of course, not to lose people's lives," Zelensky said in English, according to the video posted on his Telegram channel.

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Last week, Zelensky told the BBC he hoped to end the "hot stage" of the war "by the end of this year" and that no one wanted to keep the conflict going "for another ten years or longer."

In the same interview, however, he clarified that his solution was for Ukraine's allies in the West to agree on backing his "peace formula" and present it to Russia as a unified bloc.

The "peace formula" is a list of Zelensky's demands first revealed in November 2022, ranging from Russia's withdrawal from all territories Ukraine claims as its own – including Crimea and Donbass – payment of reparations, war crimes trials for the Russian leadership, and Ukraine's membership in NATO. Moscow has rejected it as delusional.

A month before publishing the "formula," Zelensky also signed a decree banning any negotiations with Russia so long as President Vladimir Putin remained in power.



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Zelensky's sudden interest in ending the conflict quickly was a marked change of tone from March, when Pope Francis urged Kiev to show "the courage of the white flag" and negotiate with Moscow.

"Our flag is a yellow and blue one," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmitry Kuleba replied at the time. "We shall never raise any other flags."

Pope Francis also made two offers to mediate in the conflict with Russia last year, only to be rejected by Kiev both times. The last rejection came in June, right before the Ukrainian grand offensive that ended up being a total failure and incurring massive casualties.

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Zelensky might be changing his rhetoric because of fears that former US president Donald Trump could return to the White House and change Washington's policy of unconditional support to Kiev, Polish international relations expert Dr. [Witold Sokala](#) said on Monday.

Russia has repeatedly said it was willing to negotiate the end of hostilities with Ukraine. Last month, Putin listed a set of terms for a ceasefire, including Kiev officially giving up NATO aspirations, withdrawing from Russian regions, and having all Western sanctions on Russia lifted.

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