

Ukraine May Have to Compromise with Russia, Says NATO Chief Stoltenberg

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Ukraine may ultimately have to agree to some kind of compromise with Russia to end the conflict, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in an interview with the BBC [published](#) on April 6, adding that it is up to the West to ensure Kiev achieves an "acceptable result." Yet, despite Stoltenberg signalling for peace negotiations and with weapons running out, Kiev has once again ruled out speaking with Moscow.

The NATO chief reiterated that the West must support Ukraine in the long term "even if we believe and hope that the war will end in the near future." He further added that Western countries should invest in Kiev's defence capabilities to make it more resilient in case of future hostilities. At the same time, he signalled that Ukraine was to choose when and under what conditions to seek peace with Russia.

"Even if we believe and hope that the war will end in the near future, we need to support Ukraine for many years, to build their defences to deter future aggression," Stoltenberg said, adding that the West's role is to help Kiev reach a negotiating position that can produce an "acceptable result."

That said, the alliance leader emphasised that he was not pressuring Kiev for any concessions, adding that "real peace" can only be achieved when "Ukraine prevails."

Earlier this week, Stoltenberg made a strong appeal for long-term support for Kiev, urging the bloc's members to "rely less on voluntary contributions and more on NATO commitments." According to several reports, Stoltenberg proposed a five-year military aid package worth €100 billion to Ukraine. The exact details of the initiative are now under discussion.

Since the beginning of the conflict, Russia remained open to talks with Ukraine. However, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky banned any negotiations with the Kremlin after four former Ukrainian territories voted overwhelmingly to join Russia in the fall of 2022. Instead, the Ukrainian leader has recommended a ten-point “peace formula” demanding that Moscow withdraw its troops from the territory that Kiev claims as its own and create a court to prosecute Russian officials for alleged war crimes. Moscow rejected the initiative as “disconnected from reality.”

In [an interview](#) with Politico on April 6, Zelensky’s chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, stated that although Ukrainians were tired of the conflict, they would vehemently oppose any compromise with Russia.

“The Russians are not interested in any negotiations. They want the capitulation of Ukraine. But it will never happen — all of us who are in Ukraine, we will not accept any compromise on our independence, on our territorial integrity, on our freedom. And this president will never agree to anything like the Minsk agreements or a frozen conflict. No, I’m sure about that,” he said.

However, last month, Zelensky suggested that a return to Ukraine’s 1991 borders was no longer a precondition for negotiations with Russia but still insisted that Kiev must regain the territory it lost to Moscow since 2022. Moscow said Ukraine must acknowledge the fact that its borders have changed drastically since the start of hostilities.

Yet, Kiev refuses to admit this reality, even as weapons are running out.

“We have to explain 100 times what we need, but there’s no point just sitting here and complaining,” Yermak said, adding that although Ukraine is grateful for all the support it is getting, more 155mm artillery shells, drones, electronic warfare systems, Patriot air-defence systems are needed.

“We still critically need additional air-defence systems because without them it is impossible to for us to defend our cities,” he added.

Zelensky’s rhetoric about military aid deliveries from the West has become increasingly desperate in recent months. Earlier in April, he warned that Kiev was not ready to defend itself against a major Russian offensive expected in late spring or summer and complained that Ukraine “didn’t have rounds, artillery rounds, a lot of different things” needed to “stabilise the situation” at the front, something he said would make Kiev’s partners “really happy.”

Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Oleksandr Syrskyi acknowledged in early April that his forces are facing a “difficult” situation and that Russia has been capitalising on its superiority in air power, missiles, and artillery stocks. Although Ukraine will inevitably get many of the weapons demanded, as many experts have already admitted, this will not be able to change the course of the war, which will end in a decisive Russian victory.

For this reason, the majority of NATO members, and now evidently even the alliance’s chief, are begrudgingly highlighting that Kiev will have no choice but to negotiate with Moscow, even if Zelensky stubbornly refuses to at this moment in time. Despite this stubbornness, Zelensky or another future Ukrainian leader will have no choice but to begin negotiations, which will include the official recognition of changed borders.

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