Putin says Russia is ready for next meeting in Istanbul with Ukraine

At today's meeting in Minsk of the leaders of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union, which consists of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Russian Federation, President Putin was asked "How is the Ukraine settlement progressing? Specifically, when will the third round of Russia-Ukraine talks take place? Two rounds have been held in Istanbul so far. We know that the sides have exchanged draft memorandums on the settlement. What is your assessment of Kiev's draft memorandum? Has there been any reaction from Kiev to Russia's draft memorandum?"

Putin said, "Regarding the memorandums, as expected, there were no surprises. I will not tell you anything surprising, either. These are two absolutely opposing memorandums, but that is precisely why talks are set up and held – to find ways to bring positions closer. The fact that they were diametrically opposed does not seem surprising to me, either. I would not like to go into details, as I believe it would be counterproductive – even harmful – to get ahead of the talks."

"With regard to what has been achieved so far following the talks, I think you can see it for yourself. Today, if I am not mistaken, another exchange took place… or was it yesterday? Today, right? And this is important. The humanitarian aspect matters because, as diplomats say, it creates conditions for substantive discussions on core issues. We agreed that after completing these exchanges and the humanitarian operation which we proposed – specifically, the transfer of the servicemen's bodies – we would press ahead with more contacts. We have already handed over more than 6,000 bodies and are ready to transfer nearly 3,000 more, but it is now up to the Ukrainian side to agree to accept the remains of their fallen soldiers."

"We agreed that after this phase is completed, we would hold the third round of talks. We are ready for it overall. The venue and the time need to be agreed upon. I expect President Erdogan to keep unchanged his supportive stance with regard to this process. We are very grateful to him for that. We stand ready to hold this meeting in Istanbul. As for the exact timeframe, the heads of the negotiating teams from both sides – who remain in constant, direct contact and regularly get on the phone with each other (which, I believe, is a good sign) – are discussing the date for the next meeting. The agenda? In my opinion, the discussion should focus on the memoranda from both sides."

David R. Cameron
June 27, 2025

P.S. The text above appears on Putin's presidential site. The Russian spelling of Kyiv is Kiev.