As the war goes on, U.S., Ukraine & Russia plan a new round of talks

UK Defence Intelligence update on battlefield situation in Ukraine as of Feb. 27, 2026.

As the British Defence Intelligence map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine as of Friday indicates, last week the Russian forces continued to attack in the area south of Sudzha toward the Ukrainian city of Sumy and at a number of points along the long contact line between the Russian and Ukrainian forces in eastern and southeastern Ukraine from the area to the south and east of Kupiansk to the area south of Lyman and Siversk toward the cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk in the western portion of Donetsk region, toward the area around Pokrovsk, and at several locations along the contact line between the forces in the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions of southeastern Ukraine.

The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reported that over the seven days last week from Sunday, Feb. 22, through Saturday, Feb. 28, the Russian forces conducted a total of 1,204 attacks – on average about 170 a day – against the Ukrainian forces defending the cities and towns in northeastern, eastern, and southeastern Ukraine. That is roughly in line with the number of attacks the Russian forces have conducted each week recently. As in previous weeks, the largest number of Russian attacks last week were against the Ukrainian forces defending the area in and around Pokrovsk which, if taken, would open a pathway northward toward the territory in Donetsk region still held by Ukraine. The General Staff reported that over the seven days last week the Russian forces conducted a more than 200 attacks against the forces defending Pokrovsk and the area around it. The Russian forces also conducted almost 200 attacks last week against the Ukrainian forces defending Huliapole, a small city in Zaporizhzhia region about 80 miles southwest of Pokrovsk.

While the Russian forces continued to attack the Ukrainian forces defending Pokrovsk and the other cities and towns in northeastern and eastern Ukraine, Russia also continued its air war against the people of Ukraine last week. Speaking on social media as Ukraine marked its traditional first day of Spring, President Zelenskyy noted that, over the three months of a winter that was one of the coldest in recent years, Russia fired more than 18,000 attack drones, more than 14,000 guided aerial bombs, and more than 700 missiles at Ukraine, many of which hit power stations and the electricity network, and many others of which hit apartment buildings in Kyiv and other cities throughout the country. Yet "despite everything," he said, "Ukrainians made it through this difficult winter."

While Russia's war against Ukraine continued both on the ground and in the air last week, there was an effort to resume the talks between the delegations of American, Ukrainian, and Russian officials that had taken place in Abu Dhabi. On Wednesday, Presidents Trump and Zelenskyy spoke by phone for about half an hour, after which Zelenskyy announced that Ukrainian officials, led by Rustem Umerov, the Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, would meet in Geneva with American presidential envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner and discuss the details of a possible postwar recovery plan for Ukraine as well as preparations for a meeting of the full negotiating teams in a trilateral format in early March. Referring to that meeting after his phone call with Trump, Zelenskyy wrote on X that "We expect this meeting to create an opportunity to move talks to the leaders' level. President Trump supports this sequence of steps. This is the only way to resolve all the complex and sensitive issues and finally end the war."

The Ukrainian and American delegations of officials met for four hours Thursday in Geneva to discuss plans for the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine. Umerov wrote in a social media that, "Today in Geneva we continue our work within the framework of the negotiation process. A bilateral meeting with the American delegation has begun – with Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner. Together with the Government's economic team, we will thoroughly work through the prosperity package: mechanisms for economic support and recovery of Ukraine, instruments for attracting investment, and frameworks for long-term cooperation." He also said they would discuss preparations for the next round of trilateral negotiations with the U.S. and Russian delegations of officials.

On Wednesday, President Zelenskyy said he had spoken with Trump before the talks to discuss the issues that their representatives would cover in Geneva, "as well as preparations for the next meeting of the full negotiating teams in a trilateral format at the very beginning of March." He said he expected the next round of talks involving the Ukrainian, American, and Russian delegations of officials would take place in Abu Dhabi this week. Following Thursday's meeting, Zelenskyy said in his regular nightly address that there was "already more readiness for the next trilateral format" and that the next round of talks involving the delegations of Ukrainian, American, and Russian officials would take place this week in Abu Dhabi. And reiterating his desire for a

meeting with President Putin, he added that preparations need to be made for "a meeting at the leadership level. This format can solve a lot."

Today Zelenskyy said that, thus far at least, the planned trilateral talks in Abu Dhabi have not been cancelled, despite the continuing U.S.-Israel military operation against Iran. But he also said, "Due to the current military conflict, we cannot confirm that the meeting will take place in Abu Dhabi." But he added, "The meeting must take place; it is important to us. We support this meeting. If there are difficulties with Abu Dhabi due to missiles and drones, then I think we have Türkiye, we have Switzerland – venues that have already worked and allowed us to meet. We will definitely support any of these three venues for the meeting. We are waiting for a response from our partners." He suggested the most likely date is March 5-6 although March 7-8 would also be possible.

Today, Dmitri Peskov, President Putin's press secretary, announced that a new round of talks will take place Wednesday and Thursday in Abu Dhabi. He said the talks are "very complex. On some issues, we have certainly come closer because there have been discussions, conversations, and on some issues it is easier to find common ground." But, he added, "There are issues where it is more difficult to find common ground." Perhaps first and foremost among the latter, there is the continuing dispute between Russia and Ukraine over territory. Russia wants to keep most if not all of the territory it now holds in the Donbas and Ukraine wants that territory returned to Ukraine. And so, despite the prospect of more talks soon, the war goes on, and with no end in sight.

David R. Cameron
March 2, 2026