

# Trump says Zelensky is ready for 'deal' with Russia

Paris (AFP) – US president-elect Donald Trump said on Sunday that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is keen on a “deal” to end the war with Russia, after the pair met in Paris to discuss the future of the conflict.

French President Emmanuel Macron hosted three-way talks with Zelensky and Trump at the Elysee Palace on Saturday, as fears grow in Kyiv about the position of the incoming US administration.

Trump has openly scoffed at the billions of dollars in military assistance being sent to Ukraine and once boasted he could end the conflict in 24 hours.

“Zelensky (sic) and Ukraine would like to make a deal and stop the madness,” Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

“There should be an immediate ceasefire and negotiations should begin. Too many lives are being so needlessly wasted, too many families destroyed, and if it keeps going, it can turn into something much bigger, and far worse.”

Hours after the trio’s meeting, the outgoing administration of US President Joe Biden announced a new \$988-million military assistance package for Ukraine.

The package features drones, ammunition for precision HIMARS rocket launchers, and equipment and spare parts for artillery systems, tanks and armoured vehicles, the Pentagon said.

## ‘Just’ peace

In Ukraine there is concern that Trump may urge domestically unpopular concessions to bring about peace. Zelensky insisted

any settlement with Russia had to be equitable.

“We all want peace. But it is very important for us... that the peace is just for all of us and that Russia, (Russian President Vladimir) Putin or any other aggressor has no possibility of ever returning,” Zelensky said according to the presidential website.



Trump has called for peace in Ukraine © YURIY DYACHYSHYN / AFP

“And this is the most important thing – a just peace and security guarantees, strong security guarantees for Ukraine,” he added.

But Zelensky also thanked Trump for his “unwavering resolve” describing the talks as “good and productive”.

Zelensky’s meeting with Trump, just before both attended the re-opening ceremony of the Notre Dame cathedral, was his first face-to-face encounter with the tycoon-turned-politician since his US election victory.

It also offered a unique chance for Macron to gain insights into how a second Trump presidency will look when he takes office in January.

The trip to Paris is Trump's first international visit since his November 5 election win.

## **'Going a little crazy'**

Trump and Macron embraced and shook hands several times on the steps of the French presidential palace.

Trump was given a full guard of honour despite not yet being in office.

"It seems like the world is going a little crazy right now and we will be talking about that," Trump told reporters as he prepared to sit down for the talks with Macron.

Trump and Macron shared an unusual handshake © JULIEN DE ROSA / AFP

Despite tensions between the two men during his first term, Trump hailed his ties with the centrist French leader, saying: "We had a great relationship as everyone knows. We accomplished a lot."

Macron told Trump it was "a great honour for French people to welcome you" for the re-opening ceremony at Notre Dame, which was devastated by a blaze in 2019 during Trump's first term.

"You were president at that time and I remember the solidarity

and the immediate reaction,” Macron added, speaking in English.

In his own reaction to the discussions, Macron wrote on social media: “Let us continue our joint efforts for peace and security.”

European allies have largely enjoyed a close working relationship with Biden on the crisis in the Middle East, but Trump is likely to distance himself and ally the United States even more closely with Israel.

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