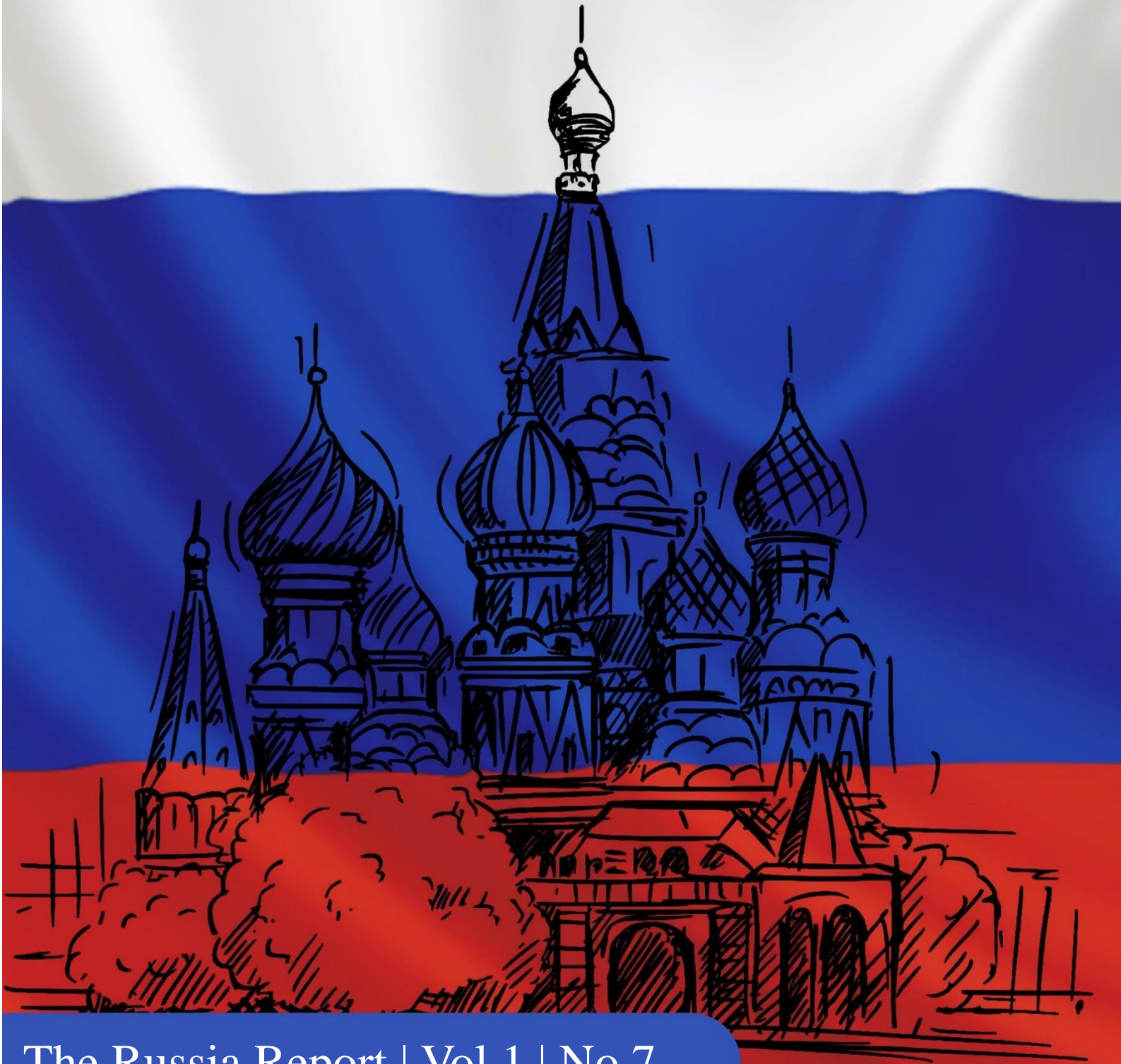


CLAWS Newsletter



The Russia Report | Vol 1 | No 7

by Anusua Ganguly

- **Russia – Ukraine Talks in Istanbul**

Russian Delegation Arrives in Istanbul for Talks with Ukraine

[TASS](#), June 2, 2025

The Russian delegation has arrived in Istanbul ahead of scheduled talks with the Ukrainian side on 2 June, a source told TASS.

"The negotiating team has arrived in Istanbul," the source confirmed.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had earlier announced that the second round of the Istanbul talks with Ukraine was set for 2 June. He stated that Vladimir Medinsky, head of the Russian delegation, would hand over Moscow's memorandum addressing all aspects of resolving the root causes of the crisis to the Ukrainian representatives.

Ukraine's Defence Minister, Rustem Umerov, noted that Kyiv is not "against" meeting the Russian delegation but wishes to receive Moscow's memorandum in advance. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov criticised this as a counterproductive approach, stressing that the key priority is to keep direct talks going.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed earlier today that the Ukrainian delegation would once again be led by Umerov.

The previous round of talks, held on 16 May, led to agreements on a 1,000-for-1,000 prisoner exchange and the sharing of documents concerning a potential ceasefire.

Lavrov and Rubio Discuss Situation Surrounding Ukrainian Crisis

[TASS](#), June 2, 2025

The ongoing Ukrainian crisis was the main focus of a phone conversation between Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, according to the Russian foreign ministry.

"Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov held a phone call with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio," the ministry stated. "The sides discussed the situation surrounding the crisis in Ukraine."

Lavrov and Rubio also exchanged views on various initiatives aimed at a political resolution, including plans to resume direct Russian-Ukrainian talks in Istanbul on 2 June.

The ministry noted that Rubio "extended his sincere condolences over the deaths of civilians resulting from the sabotage of railway infrastructure in the Bryansk and Kursk regions on 1 June."

The Russian side emphasised that relevant authorities are conducting a thorough investigation, and the findings will be made public in due course. Those responsible, it said, will be identified and held to account.

Turkish Intelligence Chief Expected to Attend Russia–Ukraine Talks — Source

[TASS](#), June 2, 2025

Director of Turkey's National Intelligence Organisation, Ibrahim Kalin, is expected to attend the upcoming Russia–Ukraine talks in Istanbul, which will be chaired by Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, a source within the Turkish Foreign Ministry told TASS.

"The meeting between the delegations of Turkey, Russia and Ukraine is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. local time (11:00 a.m. GMT) and will be led by Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. His opening remarks will be broadcast live. National Intelligence Organisation Director Ibrahim Kalin is also expected to attend," the source said.

It remains unclear whether the protocol for this meeting indicates a trilateral format. On 30 May, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova stated that neither Turkey nor any other third party would be acting as a mediator in the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul.

The source also shared the expected composition of the Russian and Ukrainian delegations. According to the ministry, Russia will be represented by Presidential Aide Vladimir Medinsky, Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin, Deputy Defence Minister Alexander Fomin, and General Staff Intelligence Chief Igor Kostyukov.

The Ukrainian delegation will include Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, First Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kyslytsya, Deputy Head of the Security Service Oleksandr Poklad, and First Deputy Head of the Foreign Intelligence Service Oleh Luhovsky.

The talks are to take place at the historic Çırağan Palace, located on the banks of the Bosphorus. The venue, which includes a luxury hotel, is regularly used by the Turkish authorities for official events. The previous round of talks, on 16 May, was held at the Dolmabahçe Palace.

Ukraine Submits List of Children to Be Returned from Russia — Zelensky's Office

[TASS](#), [Izvestia](#), June 2, 2025

During the latest round of talks in Istanbul, the Ukrainian delegation handed over a list of children it wishes to see returned from Russia, according to Andrey Yermak, Head of the Office of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

"During today's talks in Istanbul, the Ukrainian side officially handed over to Russia a list of Ukrainian children who must be returned. This concerns hundreds of minors," Yermak wrote on his Telegram channel. He described the children as having been "illegally" taken to Russia. "We are awaiting a response — the ball is now in Russia's court," he added.

Direct negotiations between Russia and Ukraine resumed on 16 May, following more than three years of suspension. The revival of talks came at the initiative of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The initial meeting lasted around two hours and resulted in an agreement to exchange 1,000 prisoners each, a deal which was subsequently carried out.

Following that first round, Russia's lead negotiator, Vladimir Medinsky, said Moscow was satisfied with the outcome and open to further dialogue. The second round of talks began today at Istanbul's Çırağan Palace at 2:43 p.m. local time (11:43 GMT) and concluded at 3:57 p.m. (12:57 GMT).

Russia and Ukraine Agree on Further Exchanges, Says Ukrainian Chief Negotiator

[TASS](#), June 2, 2025

Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov has announced that Russia and Ukraine have agreed to carry out further exchanges, with full details to be shared in due course.

Speaking in a video published by Novosti Live, Umerov stated: *"We have agreed on exchanges. Details will soon be made public."*

He confirmed that the agreement would cover the exchange of the seriously wounded, the sick, and children, as well as the repatriation of the bodies of those who have lost their lives in the conflict.

"Details and more information will be announced later," he added, before concluding his remarks to reporters.

Ukraine's Neutrality, Recognition of Donbass and Novorossiya Among Key Points in Russian Memorandum

[TASS](#), June 2, 2025

A Russian memorandum presented to the Ukrainian delegation during negotiations in Istanbul outlines proposals for a potential settlement, including Ukraine's neutrality, international recognition of Crimea, Donbass, and Novorossiya as part of Russia, and the regulation of future military activity on Ukrainian territory.

According to the document, reviewed by TASS, Russia proposes a sequence of steps toward a ceasefire and eventual peace treaty, with detailed provisions across three main sections.

Key Elements of the Proposed Settlement

- Ceasefire Agreement: Kyiv would be required to sign an agreement implementing the terms of the proposed final settlement.
- Territorial Recognition: The document calls for international recognition of Crimea, Donbass, and Novorossiya as Russian territories.
- Rights of Russian Speakers: It emphasises safeguarding the rights, freedoms, and interests of Russian-speaking populations in Ukraine.
- Language and Historical Policy: Russian would be granted official language status, and Ukraine would be required to outlaw the glorification and promotion of Nazism and neo-Nazism.
- Religious Freedoms: All restrictions on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church would be lifted.
- Neutral Status: Ukraine would commit to remaining neutral, refraining from joining any military alliances or coalitions. It would also prohibit foreign military activity, including the establishment of military bases and infrastructure, on its territory.
- Nuclear Ban: A direct prohibition on the hosting, transit, and deployment of nuclear weapons in Ukraine.
- Military Limits: Caps would be imposed on the size and equipment of Ukraine's armed forces.
- Sanctions and Claims: Ukraine would be required to lift all existing sanctions on Russia and pledge not to introduce new ones. Both sides would waive mutual claims related to wartime damage.
- Restoration of Relations: A gradual normalisation of diplomatic and economic ties, including gas transit, is envisaged.

Ceasefire Conditions

The second section outlines two potential ceasefire scenarios:

- First Option: A complete withdrawal of Ukrainian armed forces from the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR), and the Kherson and Zaporozhye Regions. Once the withdrawal begins, a 30-day ceasefire would come into effect, with the pullout to be completed within that timeframe.
- Second Option: A ten-point ceasefire package, including:
 - A ban on redeployment of Ukrainian forces, except for withdrawal.
 - A halt to all Western arms supplies and intelligence sharing with Ukraine.
 - No foreign military presence or participation in Ukrainian operations.
 - The lifting of martial law in Ukraine.
 - Suspension of mobilisation and initiation of demobilisation.
 - Dissolution of nationalist military formations.
 - Amnesty for political prisoners and the release of detained personnel.

A bilateral ceasefire monitoring and control centre would also be established.

The third section of the memorandum outlines the implementation timeline:

- Following the transfer of 6,000 bodies of fallen soldiers to Ukraine, a ceasefire memorandum would be signed, including a fixed timeline for executing its provisions.
- A 30-day ceasefire would follow.
- Elections would then be held and government institutions formed across Ukrainian territory.
- Ukraine would be required to announce a date for presidential and parliamentary elections within 100 days of lifting martial law.
- The final peace treaty would be signed and ratified through a binding resolution of the United Nations Security Council.

Kremlin: Russian Memorandum Seeks to Address Root Causes of Ukrainian Conflict

[TASS](#), June 3, 2025

Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated that the memorandum recently submitted to the Ukrainian side aims to tackle the underlying causes of the ongoing conflict, offering a path toward a sustainable resolution.

Speaking at a press briefing on 3 June, Peskov acknowledged the complexity of the situation, describing the settlement issue as “utterly complex” and involving “a lot of nuances.”

“You saw the published draft memorandum yesterday, which we handed over to the Ukrainian side,” Peskov said. “It includes many provisions, outlining various settlement options. Everything is aimed at eliminating the root causes of the conflict and placing it on a sustainable settlement track.”

TASS, which published the full text of the memorandum, reported that the document proposes a final settlement framework for Ukraine. Key provisions include Kyiv renouncing its radical nationalist stance, guaranteeing the rights of Russian-speaking citizens, and the full withdrawal of Ukrainian forces from Russian territories — including those incorporated after 2022.

• Ukraine’s Drone Attack on Russia

Ukraine Launches Massive Drone Strikes on Russian Air Bases in Bold Operation

[CNN](#), June 2, 2025

In one of its most ambitious operations since the war began, Ukraine has destroyed dozens of Russian warplanes in coordinated drone strikes on air bases thousands of miles from the front lines. According to a source within Ukraine’s security services, the operation, codenamed

“Spiderweb”, targeted several key Russian airfields, including those in Irkutsk, Murmansk, Ryazan, and Ivanovo.

The Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) claims that over 40 aircraft, including strategic bombers such as TU-95s, Tu-22M3s, and a rare A-50 surveillance plane, were hit during the attacks. The damage has been estimated at \$7 billion, with around 34% of Russia’s strategic cruise missile carriers affected.

Striking as far as Belaya Air Base in eastern Irkutsk—closer to Japan than Ukraine—this operation marks a significant escalation in Kyiv’s long-range capabilities. The Olenya base near Murmansk in the Arctic Circle, and other key sites, were also targeted.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed that 117 drones were used in a mission that took over 18 months to plan. He described the operation as "absolutely unique", adding that drones were smuggled into Russia inside wooden mobile homes mounted on trucks. The drones were concealed under retractable roofs and launched remotely.

Footage verified by CNN shows drones being launched from mobile platforms near Belaya air base, with smoke visible in the background. Social media videos also depict similar scenes from other targeted regions.

The timing of the operation is significant, occurring just before Russia–Ukraine peace talks in Istanbul. Tensions are already high, with Ukrainian officials accusing President Vladimir Putin of sabotaging negotiations. Though Russia proposed “direct talks” in Turkey, Putin did not attend, and only low-level delegations were sent.

The Russian Ministry of Defence acknowledged drone attacks across five regions. It said the strikes in Ryazan, Ivanovo, and Amur were repelled, but aircraft were set ablaze in Murmansk and Irkutsk. There were no casualties, and several individuals allegedly involved have been detained.

Irkutsk Governor Igor Kobzev confirmed drones had been launched from a truck near the Belaya base. Emergency services responded to the incident, but the total number of drones used remains unclear.

The strikes appear to be a direct response to Russia’s largest drone assault on Ukraine to date, which took place on 31 May, involving 472 drones. That same day, a Russian missile strike on a Ukrainian training site killed at least 12 and injured over 60.

A senior US defence official said Ukraine’s operation demonstrated a new level of tactical sophistication, and confirmed that the Trump administration was not briefed in advance.

Kremlin: Russia Will Take All Necessary Measures Over Drone Attacks on Airfields

[TASS](#), June 4, 2025

Russia will take all required steps to address the recent drone strikes on military airfields, which Moscow has described as a criminal act, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on 4 June.

“Everything that must be done to resolve this crime will be done,” Peskov told reporters when asked whether Moscow planned to seek assistance from Kazakhstan, following reports that a suspect had fled there.

According to the Russian Defence Ministry, Ukraine launched a coordinated drone attack on 1 June targeting airfields in the Murmansk, Irkutsk, Ivanovo, Ryazan, and Amur regions. The ministry confirmed that attacks in Ivanovo, Ryazan, and Amur were successfully repelled.

The incident caused fires involving several aircraft, though the blazes were quickly extinguished. The Defence Ministry reported that there were no military or civilian casualties, and that several individuals suspected of involvement had already been detained.

Terrorist Acts in Russian Regions Cause Over \$12.7 Million in Damage

[TASS](#), June 4, 2025

The total damage caused by recent terrorist attacks in Russia’s Bryansk and Kursk regions has exceeded 1 billion roubles (around \$12.7 million), according to Alexander Bastrykin, head of the Russian Investigative Committee. He shared the update during a meeting with President Vladimir Putin and Cabinet members.

The most significant incident took place on 1 June in Bryansk Region, where five improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were detonated. Two additional unexploded devices were later discovered at the scene. Investigations are underway in coordination with the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Interior Ministry.

Although no perpetrators have been officially named, Russian authorities have increasingly suggested Ukrainian involvement in recent sabotage activities across border regions.

The attacks come amid heightened tensions and ongoing military operations, with peace talks between Russia and Ukraine expected to resume in Istanbul later this week.

- **Putin – Trump Phone Call**

Kremlin Confirms Putin and Trump Held Phone Conversation

[TASS](#), 4 June, 2025

Russian President Vladimir Putin and former US President Donald Trump held a telephone conversation earlier today, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed to TASS.

"President Putin and President Trump spoke by phone," Peskov stated.

This marks their fourth conversation since the beginning of the year. The previous call took place on 19 May, following the initial round of renewed Istanbul talks between Moscow and Kyiv.

During their most recent exchange, the two leaders discussed bilateral relations and the ongoing efforts to resolve the conflict in Ukraine. In particular, they addressed the proposal to exchange memoranda outlining potential terms for a ceasefire between Moscow and Kyiv.

Earlier conversations were held on 12 February and 18 March. Discussions throughout the year have included the broader normalisation of relations between Moscow and Washington, alongside various aspects of the Ukrainian settlement process.

Putin–Trump Dialogue Vital for Peace and Global Security — Dmitriev

[TASS](#), 4 June, 2025

The ongoing dialogue between Russian President Vladimir Putin and former US President Donald Trump plays a crucial role in fostering peace, reducing tensions in Ukraine, and strengthening global security, according to Kirill Dmitriev, CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund and Special Envoy of the Russian President.

“The dialogue between President Putin and President Trump is important for peace, de-escalation [of the conflict in Ukraine], and global security,” Dmitriev stated on social media platform X, in response to news of the latest phone call between the two leaders.

He emphasised that direct communication at the presidential level is essential to counter disinformation and avoid misperceptions that could exacerbate international tensions.

Trump Tells Putin He Was Unaware of Kiev’s Airfield Attack Plans — Kremlin Aide

[TASS](#), June 4, 2025; [Defense Mirror](#), June 5, 2025

Former US President Donald Trump told Russian President Vladimir Putin that Washington had no prior knowledge of Kiev’s plans to carry out drone attacks on Russian military airfields, according to Kremlin aide Yury Ushakov.

Speaking at a briefing following the leaders’ telephone conversation, Ushakov said, “The issue of attacks on military airfields was also raised. Donald Trump emphasised once again that the United States had not been informed about this in advance.”

The statement follows a series of drone attacks carried out by Ukrainian forces on 1 June, targeting airfields in Russia's Murmansk, Irkutsk, Ivanovo, Ryazan, and Amur regions. According to the Russian Defence Ministry, the strikes in Ivanovo, Ryazan, and Amur were successfully repelled. Several aircraft caught fire during the incidents but were quickly extinguished. No casualties were reported among military or civilian personnel, and several suspects linked to the attacks have been detained.

Kremlin Silent on Putin's Response Plans Discussed with Trump Over Airfield Strikes

[TASS](#), June 4, 2025

The Kremlin has declined to disclose the details of what President Vladimir Putin told former US President Donald Trump regarding Russia's potential response to recent Ukrainian drone strikes on military airfields.

Speaking to reporters, Presidential Aide Yury Ushakov confirmed that the subject was raised during the leaders' phone call but offered no specifics on Russia's planned course of action.

"This topic was indeed discussed," Ushakov said in response to a question from TASS. "I've already said what I could on this matter. What Trump categorically emphasised was that the American side had not been informed about this in advance by the relevant Ukrainian authorities."

According to Ushakov, Trump also relayed that President Putin stated— "and very strongly"—that Russia would be compelled to respond to the recent attacks on its airbases.

On 1 June, Ukrainian drones targeted military airfields across several Russian regions. While some attacks were repelled, others caused damage to aircraft. No casualties were reported.

Trump: Putin says He Will Respond to Ukrainian Drone Strikes on Russian Airfields

[TASS](#), June 4, 2025

Former US President Donald Trump has stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin informed him during a telephone conversation that Russia intends to respond to the recent Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian airfields.

"President Putin did say, and very strongly, that he will have to respond to the recent attack on the airfields," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

The attacks, which took place on 1 June, involved drones targeting military airfields in the Murmansk, Irkutsk, Ivanovo, Ryazan, and Amur regions. According to the Russian Defence Ministry, the strikes in Ivanovo, Ryazan, and Amur were successfully repelled. While several aircraft caught fire, the blazes were swiftly extinguished. No casualties were reported among

military or civilian personnel. Authorities also confirmed that several individuals involved in the attacks had been detained.

Putin Accuses Ukraine of Aiming to Disrupt Talks with Recent Attacks

[TASS](#), June 5, 2025

Russian President Vladimir Putin has accused Ukraine of deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure in an attempt to derail the second round of peace talks scheduled to take place in Turkey.

“All the crimes committed against civilians, including women and children, on the eve of the latest round of Russia-proposed peace talks in Istanbul were certainly aimed at disrupting the negotiation process,” Putin said during a virtual cabinet meeting. “The attack deliberately targeted the civilian population.”

On the night of 31 May, at 10:44 p.m. Moscow time (GMT+3), a passenger train travelling from Klimov to Moscow derailed on a single-track section between Pilshino and Vygonichi in the Bryansk Region. The derailment occurred due to the collapse of a road bridge, which Governor Alexander Bogomaz later confirmed had been blown up intentionally.

In the early hours of 1 June, around 3 a.m. (GMT+3), a railway bridge in the Zheleznogorsk district of the Kursk Region was also destroyed, causing a passing train to crash onto a highway. The Russian Investigative Committee has classified both incidents as terrorist attacks. According to official reports, seven people lost their lives in these attacks. In the Bryansk Region alone, 120 victims sought medical assistance, while in the Kursk Region, the train driver and two assistants sustained injuries.

- **Russia on Iran-Israel Conflict**

Putin Engages in Diplomatic Talks Following Escalation Between Israel and Iran

[President of Russia](#), June 13, 2025

In response to the alarming escalation triggered by Israel’s recent military action against Iran, Russian President Vladimir Putin held telephone discussions with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

President Putin extended his condolences to the Iranian leadership and people, expressing sorrow over the significant loss of life resulting from the Israeli strikes, including among civilians.

He firmly condemned Israel's actions, stating they constituted a breach of the United Nations Charter and international law. The Russian President reiterated his country's steadfast support for a peaceful resolution to the situation surrounding Iran's nuclear programme and highlighted Russia's ongoing diplomatic initiatives aimed at achieving mutually acceptable agreements. He reaffirmed Russia's commitment to promoting de-escalation between Iran and Israel.

In his conversation with Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Putin underscored the necessity of resuming dialogue and addressing all issues related to Iran's nuclear programme through political and diplomatic means alone. He also conveyed Russia's readiness to act as a mediator in order to help avert further deterioration of the situation.

It was agreed that Russia will continue to maintain close contact with both Iranian and Israeli authorities, with the aim of resolving a crisis that poses serious risks for the stability of the entire region.

Foreign Ministry Statement on Israel's Strikes Against Iran

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, June 13, 2025

We express our deep concern over the dangerous escalation of tensions in the Middle East. We strongly condemn the military actions carried out by the State of Israel during the night of 13 June, which represent a clear violation of the United Nations Charter and fundamental principles of international law.

The unprovoked military strikes against a sovereign UN member state—targeting its citizens, peaceful urban areas, and critical nuclear energy infrastructure—are wholly unacceptable. Such actions threaten regional and global peace and security and must not go unaddressed by the international community.

The timing of these attacks appears especially cynical, coinciding with a session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors and taking place just prior to a new round of indirect talks between representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States. These actions have severely undermined painstaking multilateral diplomatic efforts aimed at easing tensions and fostering trust around Iran's peaceful nuclear programme.

It is clear that the Israeli leadership in West Jerusalem has made a conscious decision to escalate the situation and raise the stakes. We have repeatedly warned of the destabilising consequences of such military ventures, which imperil peace and security across the region. Responsibility for the outcome of these provocative acts rests squarely with the Israeli government.

We are closely following developments at the IAEA, which bears significant responsibility in this grave situation. Its personnel, along with Iranian citizens, were also placed at risk by the

Israeli strikes. We expect the IAEA Director General to deliver a balanced and impartial assessment of the unfolding situation—especially with regard to the potential radiological implications of attacks on nuclear facilities within Iran.

We further hope that Western nations—who recently instigated a wave of anti-Iran rhetoric at the IAEA Board of Governors, and pushed through a short-term resolution driven by political motives rather than broad international consensus—will recognise the dangerous consequences of their actions and the degree of responsibility they bear for the unfolding crisis.

We firmly maintain that, irrespective of any rationale offered by those who planned and executed these attacks, the Iranian nuclear issue cannot and must not be resolved through military means. A sustainable and lasting resolution is only achievable through peaceful, political, and diplomatic channels. We sincerely hope that this understanding will prevail.

We urge all parties to exercise maximum restraint, avoid further escalation, and prevent the outbreak of a full-scale conflict in the region.

In this context, we note positively that the United States remains prepared to engage in a new round of negotiations with Iran on its nuclear programme, to be held in Oman.

Russia to Maintain Dialogue with Iran and Israel for Conflict Resolution — Kremlin

[TASS](#), June 13, 2025

Following talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, as well as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Kremlin's press service announced that Russia will continue close communication with both Tehran and Jerusalem to prevent the escalation of their conflict and its potentially severe consequences for the wider Middle East.

“The Russian side will maintain close dialogue with the leaders of Iran and Israel, aimed at resolving the current situation, which carries the gravest risks for the entire region,” the Kremlin stated.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov Holds Telephone Conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), June 14, 2025

On 14 June, at the initiative of the Iranian side, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov held a telephone conversation with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Abbas Araghchi.

The discussion followed the 13 June telephone exchange between President of Russia Vladimir Putin and President of Iran Masoud Pezeshkian. Minister Lavrov reaffirmed Russia's strong condemnation of Israel's use of force against Iran, carried out in contravention of the United Nations Charter and established norms of international law. He reiterated Moscow's readiness to continue supporting efforts aimed at resolving the situation surrounding Iran's nuclear programme and at promoting de-escalation between Iran and Israel.

Minister Lavrov extended heartfelt condolences to the Iranian people and government over the loss of life caused by the recent strikes, including civilian casualties.

Both sides agreed to maintain close coordination on this matter, including discussions within the United Nations Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors, as well as through regional and multilateral platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Warns of Risks from Israeli Strikes on Iranian Nuclear Sites

[TASS](#), June 16, 2025

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov has warned of the "obvious" and potentially grave consequences stemming from Israel's recent strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities. Speaking to reporters in Moscow, Ryabkov urged the Israeli leadership in West Jerusalem to exercise restraint and act with common sense in the face of escalating tensions.

"These are matters of serious international concern," Ryabkov said. "Strikes on nuclear infrastructure carry risks that are evident to all, and their consequences could be far-reaching—not only for the region but for global stability."

The Deputy Minister confirmed that detailed discussions are underway in both New York and Vienna, including a special session of the IAEA Board of Governors focused on the situation. He noted that global markets are already reacting to the instability, underscoring the broader implications of the conflict.

Ryabkov's remarks came in the wake of Israel's launch of **Operation Rising Lion** overnight on 13 June, targeting elements of Iran's nuclear programme. Iran responded with retaliatory strikes within 24 hours, followed by further exchanges between Tel Aviv and Tehran. Both nations have reported casualties and damage to infrastructure, though they claim impacts have been limited.

Moscow continues to call for de-escalation and has reiterated its appeal to all parties to avoid actions that could lead to a wider conflict.

Russian Foreign Ministry Issues Statement on Escalation Between Iran and Israel

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), June 17, 2025

The Russian Foreign Ministry has issued a formal statement expressing deep concern over the escalating conflict between Iran and Israel, warning of serious risks to regional and global stability.

Moscow strongly condemned Israel's continued military strikes on Iranian territory, including attacks on nuclear energy infrastructure, calling them unlawful and a direct threat to international security. The Ministry emphasised that such actions could lead to a nuclear catastrophe with global repercussions and urged Israel to immediately halt its operations targeting nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

The statement also criticised certain Western nations for politicising the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and backing what Russia described as a "biased" resolution against Iran. According to Moscow, these actions have undermined diplomatic efforts and contributed to the current crisis.

Russia called on the IAEA to deliver an objective report to both its Board of Governors and the UN Security Council, assessing the damage caused by Israeli strikes and the safety of nuclear inspectors in Iran.

Welcoming Iran's reaffirmed commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its stated willingness to resume dialogue with the United States, Russia reiterated its position that the Iranian nuclear issue must be resolved through diplomacy—not force.

Kremlin: Israel Shows No Interest in Peace or Mediation in Conflict with Iran

[TASS](#), June 17, 2025

The Kremlin has stated that it sees no willingness from Israel to pursue a peaceful resolution or engage in mediation over its escalating conflict with Iran.

Speaking at a press briefing in Moscow, Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia had offered to mediate, with President Vladimir Putin making clear the country's readiness to support diplomatic efforts. However, he noted that "at the moment, we see an unwillingness on the part of Israel, at the very least, to engage in any kind of mediation or to enter the peace path at all."

Peskov's remarks come as tensions between Israel and Iran continue to intensify following the launch of Operation Rising Lion by Israel on the night of 13 June, targeting Iran's nuclear infrastructure. Iran responded with a retaliatory strike less than 24 hours later, and both sides have since exchanged further attacks, resulting in casualties and limited damage to facilities.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has indicated that Israel no longer considers diplomacy a viable path for addressing the Iranian nuclear issue and is now committed to pursuing what he described as "an acceptable result by military means."

Moscow continues to express concern over the growing risk of a wider regional conflict and is urging all parties to return to the path of diplomacy and de-escalation.

Medvedev: Strikes on Nuclear Sites Risk ‘New Chernobyl’

[TASS](#), June 19, 2025

Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev has warned that military attacks on nuclear facilities could lead to a disaster similar to Chernobyl.

Posting on X, Medvedev stated: “Everyone, even the Israeli defence minister... must understand that attacks on nuclear facilities are extremely dangerous and can lead to a repeat of the Chernobyl tragedy.”

The warning follows Israel’s Operation Rising Lion targeting Iran’s nuclear programme, and retaliatory strikes by Tehran. Medvedev’s comments were a direct response to Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz, who recently suggested eliminating Iran’s Supreme Leader as a military goal.

Putin Highlights Russian-Speaking Demographic in Israel Amid Middle East Tensions

[TASS](#), June 20, 2025

Vladimir Putin noted that Israel is “almost a Russian-speaking country”, with around two million residents from the former Soviet Union. He said this is a factor Russia carefully considers in its foreign policy.

At the same time, Putin stressed that Russia maintains longstanding, friendly and allied ties with the Arab and Islamic world, noting that 15% of Russia’s population is Muslim and that Russia holds observer status in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The comments come amid ongoing escalation between Israel and Iran, following Israel’s launch of Operation Rising Lion on 13 June. Russia has condemned Israeli strikes on Iranian territory and reiterated its offer to mediate.

Russia Condemns U.S. Strikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), June 22, 2025

The Russian Foreign Ministry has issued a strong condemnation of the United States' missile and air strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities carried out in the early hours of 22 June. The strikes follow recent Israeli attacks and mark a serious escalation in the ongoing crisis.

Moscow described the U.S. action as a “blatant violation” of international law, the UN Charter, and relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The Ministry expressed particular concern that such strikes were launched by a permanent member of the Security Council, undermining the principles the body is meant to uphold.

The statement warned that the consequences—both political and environmental—remain uncertain, but the risk of further regional destabilisation and a broader conflict in the Middle East has risen significantly.

Russia emphasised that the attacks have inflicted serious damage on the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, calling into question the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the integrity of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) verification mechanisms.

Moscow urged the IAEA to deliver a clear, objective, and timely report on the situation, without political ambiguity. The Russian government also called for an urgent and firm response from the UN Security Council.

Concluding the statement, the Foreign Ministry reiterated its call for an immediate end to all acts of aggression and a return to diplomatic engagement as the only sustainable path forward.

President Putin Held Talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi

[President of Russia](#), June 23, 2025

President Vladimir Putin met today at the Kremlin with Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Abbas Araghchi, for high-level talks amid heightened regional tensions.

The meeting, held during a period of serious escalation in the Middle East, was attended by senior officials from both sides. Representing Russia were Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Presidential Aide Yury Ushakov, and Deputy Chief of the General Staff Igor Kostyukov. The Iranian delegation included Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali and Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi.

President Putin welcomed Mr Araghchi to Moscow, noting the importance of direct dialogue at such a critical time. He reiterated Russia's firm opposition to the "completely unprovoked act of aggression" against Iran and reaffirmed Russia's commitment to supporting the Iranian people. The President highlighted that Moscow's position has been made clear at the United Nations Security Council and in statements by the Russian Foreign Ministry.

Putin also acknowledged his recent discussions with regional and international leaders—including those of the United States, Israel, the UAE, and Iran—and expressed hope that the current visit would facilitate a deeper understanding of the unfolding crisis.

Foreign Minister Araghchi thanked the Russian side for its principled stance and expressed appreciation for the close and strategic partnership between the two countries. He condemned the recent attacks by both Israel and the United States, calling them "illegitimate" and in violation of international law.

Araghchi praised Russia's constructive role in Iran's nuclear programme, particularly through cooperation on the Bushehr nuclear power plant and broader diplomatic support in international fora.

The meeting provided an opportunity for both sides to reaffirm their shared positions, discuss paths toward de-escalation, and strengthen coordination amid growing regional instability.

- **Russia – North Korea**

Russia's Top Security Official Visits Pyongyang, Set to Meet Kim Jong Un

[TASS](#), June 4, 2025

On the instructions of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Secretary of Russia's Security Council Sergey Shoigu has arrived in Pyongyang, where he is scheduled to hold talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, a TASS correspondent has reported.

This marks Shoigu's second visit to North Korea in under three months.

According to the Russian Security Council's press service, discussions will focus on the implementation of key provisions of the Russia–DPRK Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The agenda also includes efforts to honour the memory of Korean soldiers who contributed to the liberation of Russia's Kursk Region during the Second World War.

In addition, the two sides are expected to address a range of pressing international issues, including the ongoing situation in Ukraine.

Shoigu's previous visit to North Korea took place on 21 March, during which he was received by Kim Jong Un for a two-hour meeting. At the time, Shoigu delivered a message from President Putin and discussed both the conflict in Ukraine and the potential for Russia–US dialogue.

Last month, during the 13th International Meeting of High-Level Officials Responsible for Security Issues, Shoigu also met with North Korea's Minister of State Security, Ri Chang Dae.

Shoigu Arrives in Pyongyang for Talks with North Korean Leader

[TASS](#), June 17, 2025

Russian Security Council Secretary Sergey Shoigu has arrived in Pyongyang on a special mission from President Vladimir Putin and is scheduled to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, according to reports from TASS.

This marks Shoigu's third visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in under three months, underscoring the growing strategic engagement between Moscow and Pyongyang.

According to the Russian Security Council, the visit is being held in line with agreements reached during Shoigu's previous trip on 4 June, which forms part of the broader framework under the recently signed Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Russia and the DPRK.

During the earlier meeting, discussions included the situation in Ukraine, cooperation on the reconstruction of Russia's Kursk Region, and joint efforts to commemorate Korean fighters who contributed to the liberation of the region.

The current visit is expected to focus on deepening bilateral cooperation under the new treaty, as well as further strategic coordination on regional and global issues.

Russian Security Official Holds Defence Talks with Senior North Korean Military Leader

[TASS](#), June 17, 2025

Russian Security Council Secretary Sergey Shoigu, currently on a special mission to Pyongyang, has held consultations with Pak Jong-chon, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), according to reports from TASS.

The meeting comes as part of Shoigu's ongoing diplomatic engagement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). He arrived in Pyongyang earlier in the day on instructions from President Vladimir Putin and has already held talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

This visit marks Shoigu's third trip to North Korea in the past three months, reflecting a notable intensification of high-level security and strategic dialogue between Moscow and Pyongyang.

Further details of the talks have not yet been made public, but they are believed to be part of a broader effort to implement the recently signed Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two nations.

North Korean Workers May Assist in Rebuilding Russia's Border Regions

[TASS](#), June 19, 2025

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin has announced that construction workers from North Korea may be involved in restoration efforts in Russia's western border regions—pending the resolution of significant logistical and organisational challenges.

"North Korea has expressed interest in participating in the reconstruction of our borderline areas," Khusnullin told reporters in St. Petersburg. "However, it remains unclear when this would take place or what their readiness entails in practical terms."

He emphasised that a number of key questions still need to be addressed, including accommodation arrangements, technical supervision, equipment logistics, and overall coordination of work.

“This is a complex organisational structure that requires careful management,” he noted, adding that substantial preparatory efforts will be necessary before foreign experts, including North Korean labourers, can be integrated into ongoing reconstruction projects.

The proposal follows recent discussions between Russian and North Korean officials amid growing strategic cooperation under the new Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

- **Lavrov in Turkmenistan**

Foreign Minister Lavrov Arrives in Turkmenistan for Official Visit

[TASS](#), June 24, 2025

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has arrived in Ashgabat for an official visit to Turkmenistan, where he was welcomed at the airport by Russian Ambassador Ivan Volynkin.

During the visit, Lavrov is scheduled to hold talks with President Serdar Berdimukhamedov and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, according to the Russian Foreign Ministry.

This marks Lavrov’s first visit to Turkmenistan since June 2022, when he attended the Caspian littoral states’ foreign ministers’ meeting.

Lavrov Meets President Berdimuhamedov in Ashgabat, Highlights Strategic Cooperation

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, News Central Asia](#), June 25, 2025

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with President Serdar Berdimuhamedov in Ashgabat, reaffirming the strength of Russia–Turkmenistan relations. Lavrov conveyed President Vladimir Putin’s thanks for Turkmenistan’s participation in the 80th anniversary Victory Day celebrations, noting the presence of a Turkmen military contingent on Red Square and commemorative events in Ashgabat.

Lavrov and Berdimuhamedov agreed to expedite the 13th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation, with focus areas including the North–South Transport Corridor, logistics, and regional connectivity.

On the humanitarian front, discussions included expanding the Alexander Pushkin Russian School, supporting cultural projects such as the Pushkin Theatre, and finalising plans for a joint Russian-Turkmen University.

The two sides also reviewed cooperation in multilateral forums, including the UN, CIS, EAEU, BRICS, and the Caspian Five. Lavrov reaffirmed Russia’s support for Turkmenistan’s 2025 CIS Chairmanship and its neutrality resolution at the UN.

Lavrov described the meeting as “highly constructive,” laying groundwork for his upcoming talks with Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov.

- **In Other News**

Russia and Iran Seek to Prevent Escalation over Tehran’s Nuclear Program — Foreign Ministry

[TASS](#), June 5, 2025

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov met with Iranian Ambassador Kazem Jalali to discuss mutual concerns about rising tensions related to Iran’s nuclear programme, the Russian Foreign Ministry announced.

“The parties expressed their shared interest in preventing further escalation, which has been fuelled by various speculations regarding alleged threats posed by Iran’s peaceful nuclear activities,” the Ministry’s statement said.

The discussions focused on the situation surrounding Iran’s nuclear programme ahead of the forthcoming International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors meeting scheduled for 9 June in Vienna. The talks also took into account ongoing indirect communications between Iranian and US officials.

The statement criticised politically motivated initiatives at the IAEA aimed at undermining Iran’s constructive cooperation with the agency and hindering dialogue between Tehran and Washington.

“The parties emphasised the importance of continuing negotiations to address unfounded suspicions and prejudices against Iran’s nuclear activities. The priority is to adhere to international law and ensure proper respect for Iran’s legitimate interests,” it concluded.

Key Facts on Kiev’s Decision to Postpone Prisoner Exchange

[TASS](#), June 7, 2025

Ukraine has unexpectedly decided to indefinitely postpone accepting bodies and carrying out a prisoner exchange with Russia, according to Russian Presidential Aide Vladimir Medinsky, who leads Moscow’s negotiation team. Lieutenant General Alexander Zorin, spokesman for the Russian delegation, added that Ukraine is currently not setting a new date for the exchange.

- On 6 June, Russia unilaterally began transferring over 6,000 bodies of Ukrainian servicemen to Ukraine, in line with Istanbul agreements.

- The process also includes exchanging wounded and seriously ill prisoners of war and those under 25.
- The first convoy carrying 1,212 bodies arrived at the exchange point, with further shipments planned.
- Russia handed over a list of 640 wounded, seriously ill, and young prisoners to Ukraine to start the exchange.
- Despite this, Ukraine has delayed the acceptance of bodies and the prisoner swap, with its delegation failing to appear at the exchange point for various reasons.
- Russia urges Ukraine to adhere to the agreed schedule and proceed without delay, welcoming international observers to verify the situation.
- Moscow confirms its full readiness to implement the Istanbul agreements and conduct the exchanges as planned.

Lavrov and Rubio Maintain Regular Contact Amid Ukraine Talks

[TASS](#), June 9, 2025; [US Department of State](#), June 1, 2025

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio remain in regular communication, with both sides committed to keeping dialogue open, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov told TASS.

The two officials have held seven phone calls and met in person in Riyadh in February, Ryabkov said. He noted that the ongoing situation in Ukraine and efforts to find a resolution shape the bilateral agenda at every level.

The possibility of another face-to-face meeting between Lavrov and Rubio depends on decisions made by the presidents of Russia and the US, as well as the urgency of the issues involved, Ryabkov added.

Future of Ukraine Conflict Will Reveal US Intent on Restoring Russia Ties — Ryabkov

[TASS](#), June 9, 2025

The future trajectory of the conflict in Ukraine will demonstrate whether the United States is genuinely committed to restoring relations with Russia, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov told TASS.

Ryabkov emphasised that reviving a full and constructive strategic dialogue with Washington, including on arms control, requires a solid political and military-political foundation grounded in consistent normalisation of bilateral ties.

He stressed that any normalisation must hinge on the US respecting Russia's fundamental interests. The Ukraine crisis, which he characterised as triggered by previous US administrations and the West, serves as a test of Washington's willingness to rebuild relations, Ryabkov concluded.

Putin Says Russia and BRICS Building Sanctions-Free Global Cooperation

[TASS, Russia – Islamic World](#), June 9, 2025

Russia, alongside its BRICS partners, is working to establish an international system of cooperation free from sanctions, coercion, and discrimination, President Vladimir Putin said in a message to participants of the 28th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF).

“We are committed to building an effective system of equal and mutually beneficial cooperation,” Putin stated, highlighting the shared values that underpin BRICS collaboration.

This year’s SPIEF will be held from 18–21 June under the theme “Shared Values: The Foundation of Growth in a Multipolar World.”

Russia Reaffirms Commitment to Istanbul Agreements, Criticises Kiev’s Inaction — Kremlin

[TASS](#), June 9, 2025

Russia remains fully committed to the agreements reached during the Istanbul negotiations, in contrast to the Ukrainian side, which has failed to uphold its obligations, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said during a briefing.

Responding to a TASS question regarding Ukraine’s cancellation of a scheduled weekend exchange of prisoners and the remains of fallen soldiers, Peskov stated:

“The Russian Federation is committed to the agreements previously reached in Istanbul during the second round of talks and consistently fulfils its obligations, unlike the Ukrainian side,” he said.

“The Russian side remains ready to implement the agreements that were outlined in Istanbul,” Peskov added.

Russian Presidential Aide Vladimir Medinsky, who headed the Russian delegation during talks with Kiev, said over the weekend that Moscow had initiated a humanitarian gesture in accordance with the Istanbul accords. This included the proposed handover of over 6,000 bodies of Ukrainian servicemen, as well as the exchange of wounded, seriously ill prisoners of war, and captives under the age of 25.

However, Medinsky noted that the Ukrainian authorities failed to respond, indefinitely postponing the exchange, thereby disregarding the spirit of the agreements.

Russia Affirms Recognition of Karabakh as Azerbaijani Territory — Foreign Ministry

[TASS](#), June 10, 2025; [TRT Global](#), June 11, 2025

Russia continues to officially recognise Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan, despite recent comments by Presidential Aide Vladimir Medinsky, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told TASS.

“Russia officially recognises this region as Azerbaijani territory, even as Mr Medinsky referred to the historical, social, and cultural aspects, and to the suffering of the people,” Zakharova said.

Her statement follows criticism from Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which objected to Medinsky’s description of Nagorno-Karabakh as “a disputed land between Armenia and Azerbaijan” — a remark made in the context of broader historical commentary.

Zakharova clarified that Medinsky “commented exclusively on the tragedy surrounding the armed conflict,” and warned against what she described as “pulling out non-existent messages or recombining words.”

Medinsky, who served as Russia’s chief negotiator during two rounds of peace talks with Ukraine, had recently made public remarks reflecting on the complex history of Karabakh, prompting a sharp reaction from Baku.

European Commission to Propose Sanctions Targeting Nord Stream Infrastructure — *Financial Times*

[TASS](#), [Financial Times](#), June 10, 2025

The European Commission is set to unveil its 18th sanctions package against Russia today, which is expected to include a ban on the use of infrastructure linked to the Nord Stream and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines, according to a report by the *Financial Times* citing informed sources.

The proposed measures come as part of broader efforts to escalate pressure on Moscow. In addition to targeting the Nord Stream infrastructure, the package reportedly includes a reduction in the price cap on Russian oil exports—from the current \$60 to \$45 per barrel.

The sanctions are also expected to hit Russia’s financial and maritime sectors. According to *The Guardian*, the European Commission plans to disconnect 22 additional Russian banks from the SWIFT payment system and blacklist 70 vessels belonging to Russia’s so-called “shadow fleet.” Notably, for the first time, an individual captain—an Indian national—is expected to be sanctioned.

The draft package will also include specific “security measures” aimed at protecting Belgium from potential legal claims by Moscow. This provision follows Belgium’s freezing of

approximately €190 billion in Bank of Russia assets under existing sanctions, the *FT* reported.

Following today's presentation, the proposed sanctions must be unanimously approved by all EU member states. Slovakia and Hungary have previously signalled reluctance to support further measures, citing concerns over potential impacts on Ukraine-related negotiations. Nevertheless, EU sources quoted by the *FT* expressed optimism that the package could be adopted by the end of July.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen reiterated in May the EU's commitment to tightening restrictions on Russia, specifically mentioning Nord Stream infrastructure and the energy and financial sectors. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has also voiced support for the proposed sanctions.

State Duma Approves Amendments to 2025 Federal Budget

[TASS](#), June 10, 2025

The State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, has approved in its second reading a bill amending key indicators of the federal budget for 2025.

Unlike previous budget debates, this round of amendments places less emphasis on balancing revenues and expenditures, and more on strategic investment, according to Alexey Govyrin, a member of the State Duma Committee for Small and Medium Business.

"The focus now lies not only in fulfilling obligations, but in laying the foundation for the future," Govyrin stated. "This includes systematic work on spatial development and prioritising the so-called 'new type cities,' which integrate educational, digital, and investment infrastructure."

He added that additional funding will be allocated for grant-based support of engineering and research and development projects. "The aim is to build a technological base capable of serving both the export market and domestic demand," he noted.

According to the revised figures passed in the first reading:

- Total budget revenues are projected at 38.5 trillion rubles (approx. \$482 billion), or 17.4% of GDP.
- Oil and gas revenues are forecast at 8.317 trillion rubles (\$104.1 billion), or 3.7% of GDP.
- Non-oil and gas revenues are expected to reach 30.188 trillion rubles (\$377.9 billion), or 13.6% of GDP.
- Expenditures will amount to 42.298 trillion rubles (\$529.6 billion).
- The budget deficit is projected at 3.8 trillion rubles (\$47.6 billion), or 1.7% of GDP.

The revised budget reflects a shift in fiscal policy towards longer-term economic resilience and innovation, with the government targeting structural modernisation and regional development as key priorities for 2025.

Russia and Israel Maintain Mutual Respect and Strong Relations — Deputy Foreign Minister

[TASS](#), June 10, 2025

Russia and Israel have managed to preserve mutual respect and close relations over recent years, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin said at a reception marking Israel's Independence Day.

“We share very deep, close, and good relations with Israel and the Israeli people,” Vershinin stated. “Our relationship has travelled a glorious path. While there have been ups and downs, the fundamental pillars of respect and trust have endured.”

Recalling historical ties, Vershinin noted that in the 1940s Moscow supported the Jewish people in establishing their statehood and was among the first to recognise the State of Israel. “Our relations have always developed correctly, grounded in mutual respect, shared benefits, and common goals,” he said.

The deputy minister also highlighted the bond forged through the shared struggle against Nazi Germany. “We recently commemorated the 80th anniversary of the Great Victory, a solemn occasion both for us and our friends in Israel. The sacrifices we endured unite us and strengthen our resolve for a secure and just world. The presence of Israeli veterans on Red Square remains a powerful symbol of this unity,” Vershinin added.

Vershinin also announced plans to launch direct flights between Moscow and the Israeli resort city of Eilat on 12 June, calling this development “a very welcome step.” The inauguration took place during the event, with high-ranking officials including Vershinin, Israeli Ambassador Simona Halperin, and the Mayor of Eilat cutting a ribbon to launch Red Wings airline's new service.

Ambassador Halperin remarked that the Middle East has undergone significant changes over the past eighteen months, with life and tourism returning robustly to Israel. “We are pleased to celebrate the launch of the first direct flight from Moscow to Eilat,” she said.

Earlier, Dani Shahr, Director General of the Israeli Tourism Ministry, told TASS that discussions with airlines are underway to increase flights to Russia, with at least one carrier prepared to expand services. He noted that the ban on Russian companies selling tours to Israel has been lifted, with only recommendations to avoid risky areas remaining in place.

Russia Ready to Assist Iran with Removal of Excess Nuclear Fuel — Kremlin

[TASS](#), June 11, 2025

Russia is prepared to assist Iran with the transfer of excess nuclear fuel if required, Russian Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov announced on Wednesday.

“We maintain regular contact with Iran,” Peskov said at a press briefing, responding to questions regarding whether Russia’s potential role in disposing of Iran’s excess nuclear fuel had been discussed during recent US-Iran talks on the nuclear programme.

“This issue was addressed with precisely such wording during the latest telephone conversation between President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump,” he added.

“Russia stands ready to provide assistance with such operations should it be deemed necessary by all involved parties,” Peskov emphasised.

The United States and Iran held their fifth round of nuclear talks in Rome on 23 May. Oman’s Foreign Minister, Badr Al Busaidi, who serves as a mediator between the sides, described the discussions as having made “certain but not final progress.”

The negotiations commenced with the first round in Muscat on 12 April, followed by rounds in Rome and Muscat in late April and mid-May.

On 1 June, the White House revealed that US Special Presidential Envoy Steve Witkoff had presented a “detailed and acceptable” proposal to Iranian authorities. According to reports by the US news outlet Axios, the proposal would permit limited low-level uranium enrichment on Iranian soil for a specified period.

However, President Trump declared on 7 June that Iran should refrain from uranium enrichment or face consequences from Washington.

Meanwhile, the Iranian Foreign Ministry stated that while Tehran is open to discussing limitations on uranium enrichment in exchange for sanctions relief, it will never cease its nuclear programme. Iran insists its right to peaceful nuclear energy is guaranteed under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which it was among the first signatories.

Russia to Participate in Upcoming BRICS Summit — Kremlin Spokesman

[TASS](#), June 12, 2025

Russia will take part in the forthcoming BRICS summit, scheduled for 6-7 July in Rio de Janeiro, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed to TASS.

“Russia is a founding member of BRICS and is certainly involved in all processes across all formats,” Peskov stated. However, he did not specify whether President Vladimir Putin is expected to attend the summit in person.

Brazil assumed the BRICS presidency from Russia on 1 January. Russia's 2024 presidency concluded with the group's summit held in Kazan from 22 to 24 October.

Since its establishment in 2006, the BRICS grouping has expanded twice. South Africa joined the original four founding members — Brazil, Russia, India, and China — in 2011. On 1 January 2024, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates became full members, with Indonesia set to join in 2025.

Vietnam Becomes BRICS Partner Country

[TASS](#), June 14, 2025

Vietnam has officially become a BRICS partner country, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry announced.

"The Brazilian government hereby confirms Vietnam's official accession as a partner country," the ministry stated. Brazil currently holds the BRICS presidency.

Vietnam is the association's tenth partner nation. The ministry noted that the country "shares with BRICS members a commitment to a more inclusive and representative international order."

"With a population nearing 100 million and a rapidly developing economy firmly integrated into global value chains, Vietnam is a significant player in Asia," the statement added.

Brazil took over the BRICS presidency from Russia on 1 January. At the BRICS summit held in Kazan, Russia, from 22 to 24 October last year, a new category of partner countries was established. The first partners included Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan. Indonesia was initially named a partner but was elevated to full membership on 6 January. Nigeria also joined as a partner on 17 January.

The highlight of Brazil's presidency will be the upcoming BRICS summit in Rio de Janeiro on 6-7 July.

Putin Confirms Russia's Readiness to Resume Talks with Kiev After 22 June

[TASS](#), June 14, 2025

Russian President Vladimir Putin, during a telephone conversation with US President Donald Trump, reaffirmed Moscow's willingness to continue negotiations with Kiev after 22 June, Kremlin aide Yury Ushakov told reporters.

"Russia expressed readiness to resume talks with the Ukrainian side, as agreed, after 22 June. Donald Trump acknowledged this and reiterated his interest in bringing the Russian-Ukrainian conflict to an end as soon as possible," Ushakov said.

The second round of renewed direct talks between Russia and Ukraine took place in Istanbul on 2 June. Lasting just over an hour, the meeting saw delegations communicate in Russian and exchange documents outlining their respective positions on various aspects of conflict resolution. Presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky, head of the Russian delegation, announced that Russia would unilaterally return the remains of 6,000 deceased Ukrainian servicemen. Both sides also agreed to carry out a reciprocal exchange of seriously ill prisoners of war and those under 25 years of age, involving at least 1,000 individuals from each side.

The initial round of talks occurred on 16 May and resulted in agreements on a 1,000-for-1,000 prisoner swap and the exchange of official terms for a possible ceasefire.

Russian Servicemen Returned in Prisoner Exchange with Ukraine

[TASS](#), June 19, 2025

The Russian Ministry of Defence has confirmed that another group of Russian servicemen has been returned from Ukrainian captivity as part of a prisoner exchange conducted under the terms of agreements reached in Istanbul on 2 June.

In return, a group of Ukrainian prisoners of war was transferred to Kyiv.

According to the ministry, the Russian soldiers were retrieved from territory under Ukrainian control and are currently undergoing medical and psychological support in Belarus. They will soon be transported to the Russian Federation for further treatment and rehabilitation.

This marks the latest exchange in ongoing efforts between Moscow and Kyiv to facilitate the return of prisoners on both sides, despite the continuing hostilities.

About the Author

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