

# Russia ready to negotiate over Ukraine, claims Putin

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**The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk:** Russian President Vladimir Putin has said Russia was ready to negotiate with all parties involved in the war but claimed the Ukrainian government and its Western backers had refused to engage in talks, report AFP and Reuters. Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February has triggered the most deadly conflict in Europe since World War Two and the biggest confrontation between Russia and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. So far there is little end in sight to the war. The Kremlin says it will fight until all its aims are achieved while Ukraine says it will not rest until every Russian soldier is ejected from all of its territory, including Crimea which Russia annexed in 2014. "We are ready to negotiate with everyone involved about acceptable solutions, but that is up to them – we are not the ones refusing to negotiate, they are," Putin told Rossiya 1 state television in an interview.

CIA Director William Burns said in an interview published this month that while most conflicts end in negotiation, the CIA's assessment was that Russia was not yet serious about a real negotiation to end the war. An adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Putin needed to return to reality and acknowledge that it was Russia which did not want any negotiations. "Russia single-handedly attacked Ukraine and is killing citizens," Mykhailo Podolyak said on Twitter. "Russia doesn't want negotiations, but tries to avoid responsibility." Ukraine and the West say Putin has no justification for what they cast as an imperial-style war of occupation which has sown suffering and death across Ukraine. Putin described Russia as a "unique country" and that the vast majority of its people are united in wanting to defend it. "As for the main part – the 99.9% of our citizens, our people who are ready to give everything for the interests of the Motherland – there is nothing unusual for me here," Putin said.

Russia has carried out a series of missile and drone strikes on Ukrainian energy infrastructure since mid-October, knocking out power and causing emergency blackouts in many areas. Yesterday a Russian strike on the southern city of Kherson, recently liberated by Ukrainian forces, killed at least 10 people, wounded 58 and left bloodied corpses on the road, authorities said, in what the Ukrainian government condemned as wanton killing for pleasure. Russia has accused Ukraine of launching the attack.