

## THE 2024 UKRAINE PEACE SUMMIT: EVALUATING DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

By

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*(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)*



The Ukraine Peace Summit took place on 15-16 June 2024 in the picturesque setting of the Burgenstock resort in Stansstad, Switzerland. This summit aimed to chart a path towards a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace for Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> The high-profile event, convened at Ukraine's request<sup>2</sup>, drew together key global leaders to address one of the most pressing conflicts of our time.

The timing of the summit was particularly notable, following closely on the heels of the EU Parliament elections held from June 6-9, 2024. These elections resulted in significant victories for parties like the European People's Party (EPP), the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), and Renew Europe (see Figure 1). These parties are all in full support of Ukraine's fight against Russia and favour providing comprehensive humanitarian, military, and financial aid to the country. This shift in the European political landscape underscored the continent's strong backing for Ukraine. However, despite their strong support for Ukraine, the results of these EU Parliament elections will have a profound impact on the internal politics of the EU, which can adversely affect the bloc's support for Ukraine.

1 "Joint Communiqué on a Peace Framework adopted at the Summit on Peace in Ukraine", European Council, Press Release, published on June 16, 2024.  
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/06/16/joint-communication-on-a-peace-framework-summit-on-peace-in-ukraine/>

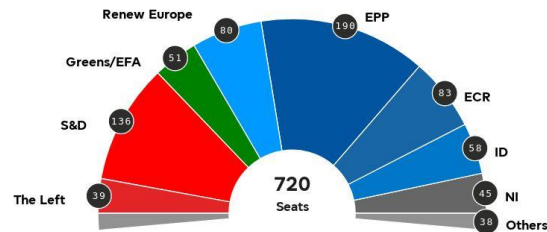
2 "Summit on Peace in Ukraine", Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) - Switzerland, Dossiers, accessed on June 20, 2024.  
<https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/fdfa/aktuell/dossiers/konferenz-zum-frieden-ukraine.html>

19/06/2024 - 18:16

All times are GMT+2

**European Parliament 2024 - 2029**

Provisional results

**Provisional**

Composition of the European Parliament based on available provisional or final national results published after voting has finished in all Member States, based on the structure of the outgoing Parliament.

According to Parliament's rules of procedure, a political group shall consist of at least 23 Members elected in at least seven Member States.

Source: Provided by Verian for the European Parliament

**Figure 13**

Moreover, the summit took place just months before the presidential elections in the United States (U.S.). These elections carry a profound degree of uncertainty regarding future American support for Ukraine. The looming possibility of President Biden not securing re-election could drastically alter U.S. policy towards Ukraine, as indicated by presidential hopeful Donald Trump. This potential shift underscores the critical need for sustained international support to ensure Ukraine's defense and rebuilding efforts continue unabated, regardless of changes in U.S. political leadership.

Adding to the urgency, Ukraine has been enduring significant battlefield setbacks, with Russian forces gaining substantial ground. This precarious situation underscored the vital importance of the summit in seeking diplomatic solutions to the on-going conflict. The summit aimed to address these multifaceted challenges, bringing together diverse international perspectives to forge a path towards peace in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment.

In the days leading up to the 2024 Ukraine Peace Summit, President Putin outlined his own terms for peace.<sup>4</sup> His proposal included the following major points:

1. **Immediate Ceasefire:** Putin called for an immediate ceasefire contingent on Ukraine withdrawing its troops from the four regions annexed by Russia in 2022.

<sup>3</sup> "2024 European election results", European Parliament, published on June 19, 2024. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> Vladimir Soldatkin, "Putin demands more Ukrainian land to end war; Kyiv rejects 'ultimatum'", Reuters, published on June 15, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-says-west-needs-find-way-work-with-russia-2024-06-14/>

2. **NATO Neutrality:** He demanded that Ukraine renounce its plans to join NATO, framing this as a critical security concern for Russia.
3. **Territorial Concessions:** Russia insisted that Ukraine recognize the annexation of Crimea and relinquish full control of the 4 territories that are partially controlled by Russia at the moment (Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Luhansk and Donetsk).
4. **Demilitarization:** Putin proposed significant demilitarization of Ukrainian forces, especially near Russian borders, to reduce perceived threats to Russian security.

These terms were outrightly rejected and widely regarded as unrealistic and manipulative by Ukraine and its allies.<sup>5</sup> Ukraine labelled the proposals as "absurd" and a disguised call for surrender, which reinforced the complex dynamics leading into the summit.<sup>6</sup>

### Who attended the Summit?

The Ukraine Peace Summit saw a robust attendance of global leaders and representatives from diverse nations and organizations.<sup>7</sup> The presence of leaders from the G7 nations—comprising the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, and Japan—highlighted the importance of the summit. Additionally, all three main EU institutions—the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Council—were represented, highlighting Europe's strong commitment to supporting Ukraine.

A total of 82 delegations signed a short communiqué at the end of the summit, demonstrating broad international support for Ukraine's peace efforts. However, notable absences included Russia, which dismissed the summit as "futile,"<sup>8</sup> and China, which also opted out.

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<sup>5</sup> "Remarks by Vice President Harris at Summit on Peace in Ukraine Opening Plenary", The White House, published on June 15, 2024.  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2024/06/15/remarks-by-vice-president-harris-at-summit-on-peace-in-ukraine-opening-plenary/>

<sup>6</sup> "Remarks by Vice President Harris and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine Before Bilateral Meeting", The White House, published on June 15, 2024.  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/06/15/remarks-by-vice-president-harris-and-president-volodymyr-zelenskyy-of-ukraine-before-bilateral-meeting/>

<sup>7</sup> "List of participating states and organisations", Summit on Peace in Ukraine, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) – Switzerland, published on June 17, 2024.  
<https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/fdfa/aktuell/dossiers/konferenz-zum-frieden-ukraine.html>

<sup>8</sup> "Russia, China absent as world leaders meet for Ukraine peace conference", Aljazeera, published on June 15, 2024.  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/15/world-leaders-meet-in-switzerland-as-ukraine-seeks-aid-amid-war-with-russia>

Despite these absences, the summit featured significant participation from key global actors. Several influential countries, such as Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, India, Thailand, Indonesia, and the United Arab Emirates, attended but did not sign the communiqué. Brazil attended as an observer and also chose not to back the communiqué.

Nevertheless, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy emphasized the importance of this international gathering, calling it a historic step towards peace.<sup>9</sup>

### What were the main points of the joint communiqué?

The Joint Communiqué issued at the end of the Ukraine Peace Summit, which centred on President Zelenskyy's peace formula, highlighted the following key aspects:

- **Commitment to International Law:** Reaffirming the principles of sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of all states, including Ukraine, within their internationally recognized borders, in line with the United Nations (UN) Charter.
- **Nuclear Safety:** Emphasizing the safe and secure use of nuclear energy and installations, particularly the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant, under Ukraine's full sovereign control. The use or threat of nuclear weapons was deemed inadmissible.
- **Food Security:** Stressing the importance of uninterrupted food production and supply, safe commercial navigation, and access to Black and Azov Sea ports. Condemning attacks on merchant ships and civilian ports, and ensuring Ukrainian agricultural products reach third countries freely.
- **Prisoner Exchange and Civilian Return:** Calling for the complete exchange of prisoners of war and the return of all deported and unlawfully displaced Ukrainian children and civilians to Ukraine.

These principles aimed to establish a peace framework; however, they also highlighted the complex challenges and controversies faced during the summit.

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<sup>9</sup> "Statement by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy During a Meeting with Media Representatives Following Global Peace Summit", President of Ukraine, Speeches, published on June 16, 2024. <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/zayava-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskogo-pid-chas-zu-91593>

## Challenges and Controversies surrounding the Summit:

The Ukraine Peace Summit, despite its intentions and broad participation, faced several significant challenges and controversies:

- **Absence of Key Players:** The absence of Russia and China was a major point of contention. China opted out, citing various geopolitical reasons. The lack of participation from these critical stakeholders, citing reasons such as Israel's presence (a country accused of war crimes) cast doubt on the potential effectiveness of the summit's outcomes.
- **Divergent Stances on Peace Terms:** Before the summit, President Putin outlined his terms for peace. These terms were rejected by Ukraine and its allies, complicating the diplomatic landscape.
- **Non-Signatories of the Communiqué:** While 82 delegations signed the final communiqué, several influential nations including Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates attended but did not sign. This lack of unanimous support underscored divisions within the international community regarding the approach to resolving the conflict.
- **Perceived Futility and Scepticism:** Scepticism abounded regarding the summit's potential for meaningful change. Critics noted that the proposals were largely based on Ukraine's Peace Formula, which Russia had previously rejected, casting doubt on the summit's efficacy in negotiations with Russia.
- **Limited Direct Involvement from Allies:** The communiqué indicated that Ukraine's allies would continue providing financial, military, and humanitarian support without direct military involvement. This stance highlighted the limitations of international intervention and the reliance on indirect support.
- **Long Shot for Negotiations:** The key aspects highlighted in the communiqué, although significant, seemed unlikely to make headway with Russia. Russia maintains control over the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, claims it has provided millions of tonnes of grain to third countries, and accuses Ukraine of using Black Sea ports for military purposes. Additionally, Russia has its stance on the displacement of Ukrainian civilians and prisoner exchanges, which complicates negotiations.

- **Lack of Discussion on Post-war Settlement:** The communiqué offered solidarity but no significant breakthrough, as it lacked discussion on what a post-war settlement would look like or Ukraine's hopes of joining NATO.
- **Complex Geopolitical Context:** The summit occurred amidst significant battlefield setbacks for Ukraine and substantial gains for Russian forces. This precarious situation, combined with the impending U.S. presidential elections and the shifting European political landscape following the EU Parliament elections, added complexity to the peace negotiations.

### **Future Implications:**

The outcomes of the Ukraine Peace Summit carry several key implications for the future of the conflict and the broader geopolitical landscape.

Ukraine's allies reaffirmed their commitment to providing financial, military, and humanitarian aid, though direct military involvement was ruled out. This support is crucial for Ukraine's defence and recovery efforts.

The absence of key players and the lack of unanimous support for the communiqué by important global players underscore the on-going diplomatic challenges. Comprehensive peace remains elusive without all critical stakeholders. The complex geopolitical context, highlighted by the non-participation of BRICS states, particularly China, will influence future diplomatic and economic strategies by Ukraine and its allies.

The communiqué's focus on nuclear safety, food security, and humanitarian issues, while important, may not significantly change negotiation dynamics with Russia, which holds strategic advantages. Moreover, the upcoming U.S. presidential elections add uncertainty to future American support, which could impact overall strategies for achieving peace.

### **Conclusion:**

The Ukraine Peace Summit marked an important step towards addressing the conflict, uniting a broad coalition of international stakeholders. However, the challenges and controversies highlight the complexities in achieving peace.

The implications for the future are multifaceted, involving continued international support, diplomatic challenges, and significant geopolitical dynamics. The summit emphasized the need for sustained diplomatic efforts to navigate these complexities. Despite obstacles, the summit was a critical effort to unify diverse perspectives and reaffirm the commitment to a peaceful resolution.

The situation will gain more clarity if a second leg of the summit is convened, as stated by President Zelenskyy<sup>10</sup>, who hopes to agree on a plan to achieve a just peace and record the real end of the war at the next Peace Summit. Additionally, the direction of the situation will also be influenced by developments on the battlefield.

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<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Looijen, "Zelenskyy wants to 'fix real end of war' at second Peace Summit", Euromaidan Press, published on June 15, 2024.  
<https://euromaidanpress.com/2024/06/15/zelenskyy-wants-to-fix-real-end-of-war-at-second-peace-summit/>