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Zelenskiy says Russia is 'not ready' for ceasefire on grain ships

By Reuters

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Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy waits for the participants of the Ukraine-Nordic-Baltic summit (NB8), amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine August 23, 2026. REUTERS/Gleb... [Purchase Licensing Rights](#) [Read more](#)

KYIV, Aug 24 (Reuters) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Russia was "not ready" for a ceasefire on attacks on ships in the Black Sea carrying agricultural produce, as Moscow wants to

extend any deal to cover attacks on Russian refineries and pipelines.

Moscow and Kyiv, major players in global agriculture markets, have accused each other of intensified attacks on vessels used for food exports during Russia's [war in Ukraine](#).

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Reuters reported this month that Ukraine had sent Russia an [offer to halt attacks](#) on civilian targets in the Black Sea. [Russia dismissed](#) the idea, saying it saw no grounds for "half-measures" that would offer a respite to the other side.

"I spoke with certain leaders. I proposed that they use their vessels to transport food from our ports, and we would not attack their ships if they came to pick up agricultural exports from Russia," [Zelenskiy](#) told journalists in remarks cleared for release on Sunday.

He said that Moscow, however, wanted a quid pro quo whereby it would halt attacks on Ukraine's grain corridor if Kyiv halted strikes on Russian energy infrastructure.

"For (Russia), it's not about the grain. It's exclusively about their energy sector, but the two are not comparable," Zelenskiy said.

Any deal to stop Ukraine's strikes on Russian oil refineries and fuel transportation would need to include a reciprocal cessation of attacks on Ukraine's energy system, he said.

Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February 2022, did not immediately comment on Zelenskiy's remarks. [The Kremlin](#) said on Monday that measures were being taken to minimise the impact of Ukraine's strikes on Russian grain exports.

Ukraine has escalated its strikes on Russian economic targets in recent weeks, including on grain export terminals.

Last winter, the harshest of the war, millions of Ukrainians were often left without power and heating as Russia focused its attacks on Ukraine's electricity network, leaving many apprehensive about the months ahead.

Reporting by Max Hunder; Editing by Daniel Flynn and Timothy Heritage

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