

Ukrainian President Zelensky pledges elections, quickly backtracks

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Under mounting pressure from the United States, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky promised to hold elections as part of a Trump-backed peace deal at the Munich Security Conference on Saturday. He then quickly specified that elections will only be held provided that a cease fire and security guarantees backed by its imperialist supporters are in place first.

“Give us two months of a ceasefire – and we will go to elections,” he said. “That’s it. Ceasefire, security, infrastructure. We need time to prepare.”

Zelensky also stipulated that the country’s soldiers be able to vote, casting additional doubt on any serious possibility of elections in 2026.

“Our soldiers are defending the country and must also be able to vote. That is extremely complicated,” he said.

Neither presidential nor parliamentary elections have been held in the supposedly democratic country since the beginning of the full-scale war between Ukraine and Russia in February 2022 and the imposition of martial law by the Zelensky government.

Zelensky’s initial presidential term legally ended in 2024 and he has since used the ongoing war with Russia as an excuse to cancel any potential elections that could undermine his rule over the country.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized Zelensky’s intransigence on the issue calling him “a dictator without elections.” A would-be dictator himself, Trump has no real interest in legitimate elections in Ukraine but views Zelensky as an impediment to striking a deal with the oligarchic Putin government at the expense of its EU rivals.

As a result of US pressure, the issue of wartime elections has gained traction in recent weeks after both the *Economist* and the *Financial Times* reported that Ukraine was considering a presidential vote in 2026.

By stipulating that any elections be held only if both a ceasefire and a “security infrastructure”—which both EU leaders and Zelensky have proposed including foreign troops on Ukrainian soil as part of a deal—he has essentially ruled out the possibility of any elections taking place.

Moscow has repeatedly rejected any discussion of foreign troops in Ukraine, a fact that is well-known by Zelensky and the EU leaders supporting the plan.

“Russia is not going to discuss the fundamentally unacceptable and security-undermining foreign intervention in Ukraine in any form, in any format,” Russian Foreign Minister Maria Zakharova told reporters at Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok in September last year.

Zakharova’s comments came after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told the *Financial Times* that the EU had “pretty precise plans” for putting an EU-backed force on Ukrainian soil as part of a “security guarantee.”

As the WSWs has reported, such proposals are simply a thinly-veiled attempt by the European powers to sabotage any potential peace deal and escalate the war to a new even more dangerous level.

Well aware of the ongoing conflict between the EU and US, Zelensky stated that his government was counting on security agreements from both sides before a peace deal, and thus elections could take place.

“We have strong agreements ready to sign with the United States and with Europe. We think that the agreement on security guarantees should come before any agreement to end the war,” Zelensky added on Saturday.

It is important to note that should any elections ever be held again under the auspices of the current Western-backed Ukrainian government, they would be far from

“democratic.”

Following Russia’s 2022 invasion, Kiev moved quickly to ban over a dozen anti-war, left-wing and pro-Russian political parties. Among them was included the “Opposition Platform-For Life,” party which was the second largest political party at the time and was projected to seriously challenge Zelensky’s own political party in future elections, as support for the ongoing civil war in the Donbass region had crashed.

In the years since, the Zelensky government and the country’s security apparatus (SBU) have carried out an unprecedented political repression throughout the country arresting, torturing and murdering tens of thousands of political opponents and working class Ukrainians on trumped-up charges of “treason.”

Among the most notable is the case of Bogdan Syrotiuk, a leading member of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), the Trotskyist youth movement in Ukraine affiliated with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). Bogdan was arrested and has been imprisoned since April 2024 after being charged under wartime statutes with “state treason,” a crime carrying a sentence of 15 years to life.

Apart from the appalling anti-democratic conditions currently existing in Ukraine, it is important to note that only right-wing candidates acceptable to the imperialist powers and the Ukrainian oligarchy would have any realistic chance of winning.

According to a December 2025 poll conducted by the Kiev-based think tank Socis Center, Zelensky would be most likely to be beaten in a presidential election by former commander-in-chief Valery Zaluzhny. Considered a war hero by some despite leading the disastrous NATO-planned “counter offensive” that led to deaths of some 125,000 Ukrainian soldiers, Zaluzhny has established a close relationship with the country’s far-right and, as well, with top generals within the US. He has publicly expressed admiration for the Ukrainian fascist leader Stepan Bandera and has been photographed repeatedly with far-right paraphernalia.

Behind Zaluzhny, the poll also showed strong support for Kyrylo Budanov, former military intelligence chief and the current head of the Office of the President of Ukraine. A hardline CIA-trained militarist, Budanov has personally overseen countless numbers of

adventurist sabotage operations, drone strikes and political assassinations of both Russian military and civilian figures on Russian soil.

While the poll showed Zelensky initially winning the first round in an election, it predicted both Budanov and Zaluzhny defeating Zelensky in a potential runoff election.

By maintaining close ties and supporting such nefarious figures like Zaluzhny and Budanov, Western imperialism is preparing to use elections to drop Zelensky and replace him with a far-right regime led by either Zaluzhny or Budanov, a fact which Zelensky himself is well aware of.

The working class must extend no faith to “democratic” elections in Ukraine or any imperialist-brokered peace deal. The fight for democratic rights and freedom for political prisoners such as Bogdan Syrotiuk is in essence the struggle to mobilize the working class in Ukraine, Russia and internationally against war and against capitalism.



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