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Merz says peace cannot come at Ukraine's expense



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Sunday that the war in Ukraine could still last for a long time and ending it quickly at the country's **expense** was not an option.

In an interview with German public broadcaster ZDF, Merz, when asked whether a **ceasefire** might be possible this year, said he hasn't lost hope but "harbors no illusions," and emphasized that supporting the country to defend itself against Russia was an "absolute priority."

"We are trying to end it as quickly as possible. But certainly not at the price of Ukraine's capitulation. You could end the war tomorrow if Ukraine **surrendered** and lost its independence," Merz said.

"Then the next country would be at risk the day after tomorrow. And the day after that, it would be us. That is not an option," the chancellor said.

Germany is a key backer of Ukraine and has delivered or pledged military support worth around 40 billion euros (\$47 billion) since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.