Trump and Vance were so rude': Ukrainians react to disastrous meeting



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Trump and Vance were so rude': Ukrainians react to disastrous meetingWhether or not President Volodymyr Zelensky was ambushed or should have been more diplomatic in the Oval Office, it was a disastrous visit for Ukraine.For those watching in Kyiv, the future of their country hung in the balance.It was an emotional conversation, but I understand our president," Yulia tells me next to Kyiv's golden-domed St Sofia's cathedral.

"Maybe it wasn't diplomatic, but it was sincere. It's about life, we want to live."Yulia reflects a political pattern in Ukraine: the more the country is attacked, the more unity there is.Before the full-scale invasion in 2022, President Zelensky's trust rating was 37%. Afterwards, it rocketed to 90%.Before Donald Trump returned to office at the start of 2025, it was 52%. After he blamed Ukraine for starting the war, it hit 65%.

"They [Donald Trump and JD Vance] were so rude," says 30-year-old Andriy. "They don't respect the people of Ukraine."It looks like Washington supports Russia!" observes Dmytro, 26.You wonder what the last 24 hours has done to President Zelensky's popularity."When the situation becomes worse, we have another rallying around the flag," explains Volodymyr Paniotto, director of the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology which conducted some of the polling.World leaders' popularity often wanes over time, and Mr Paniotto says President Zelensky has not been immune.

His ratings especially took a hit with Ukraine's failed counteroffensive of 2023, and his sacking a year later of the popular commander in chief of his armed forces, Valeriy Zaluzhnyi.But Donald Trump's new, transactional, often-hostile approach to Ukraine has forced the country to unite and brace for further uncertainty.President Zelensky hoped his Washington visit would lead to a deeper co-operation with the US which could, in turn, bring a lasting peace. Something Sovsun thinks nobody wants more than Ukrainians."We are the ones who are suffering, it's extremely difficult to live under this stress," she adds. "Just this morning, I read that my friend's son was killed, his second son in this war."

What the MP and countless Ukrainians don't want is a rushed settlement. Attempted ceasefires with Russia in 2014 and 2015 only allowed Moscow to prepare for its full scale-invasion years later.