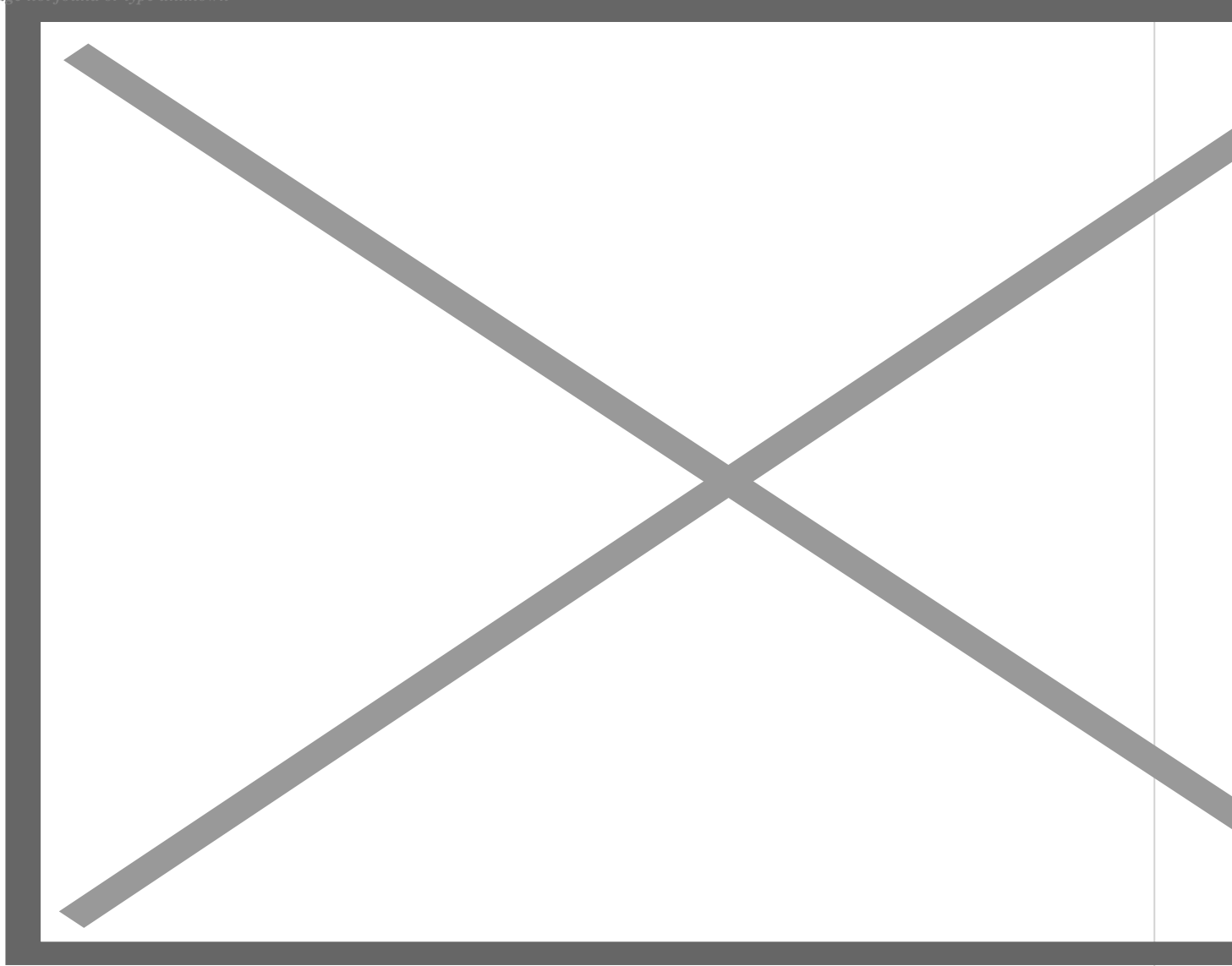


Iran bashes Israeli prime minister's UN speech as filled with lies

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Iranian Ambassador to the UN Majid Takht-Ravanchi speaks to the media outside Security Council chambers at the UN headquarters. [File:Shannon Stapleton/Reuters]

United Nations, September 28 (RHC)-- Iran has responded to Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's speech at the UN General Assembly, accusing him of trying to propagate "Iran-phobia" and cleanse Israel's actions across the region. Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's permanent representative to the UN, said in a tweet on Tuesday that Bennett's speech was "full of lies."

"That regime is in no position to discuss our peaceful [nuclear] programme when it has hundreds of nuclear warheads," he wrote, adding that Bennett's failure to mention Palestine in his speech "illustrates a determination to deprive Palestinian rights."

In his speech on the final day of the UNGA on Monday, the Israeli prime minister had blasted Iran's regional activities and support for movements opposed to Israel, claiming that Iran wants to dominate the region "under a nuclear umbrella."

Bennett claimed Iran's nuclear program has hit a "watershed moment" and "all red lines" have been crossed as the country is enriching uranium to 60 percent and the safeguard agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are being "violated."

Meanwhile, he referred to Israel as a "lighthouse in a stormy sea" that wants democracy and freedom, and wishes to build a better world.

In a statement, Iran's mission to the UN called Bennett's claims "baseless" and said he was deceptively trying to cast Israel in an innocent light. "His malicious goal is clear: to cover up all the Israeli regime's expansionist and destabilising policies and its criminal behaviour in the region during the past seven decades," it said.

That is while, the statement said, Israel is an occupying state and has turned the Gaza Strip into the world's largest open-air prison, while Israeli leaders engage in "terrorist activity" across the region. The Iranian mission also slammed Israel for a continued refusal to join nuclear non-proliferation treaties while purportedly amassing conventional and nuclear arms.

The latest standoff between the regional arch-foes comes as world powers party to Iran's 2015 nuclear deal are trying to restore the landmark accord – despite fierce opposition by Israel – that former US President Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned in 2018.

Six rounds of talks to revive the deal concluded on July 20, and Iran has said it will return to Vienna for talks "very soon". But many uncertainties remain on the way to reaching an agreement that would lift punishing sanctions on Iran, and once more rein in the nuclear programme that it says is strictly peaceful.

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