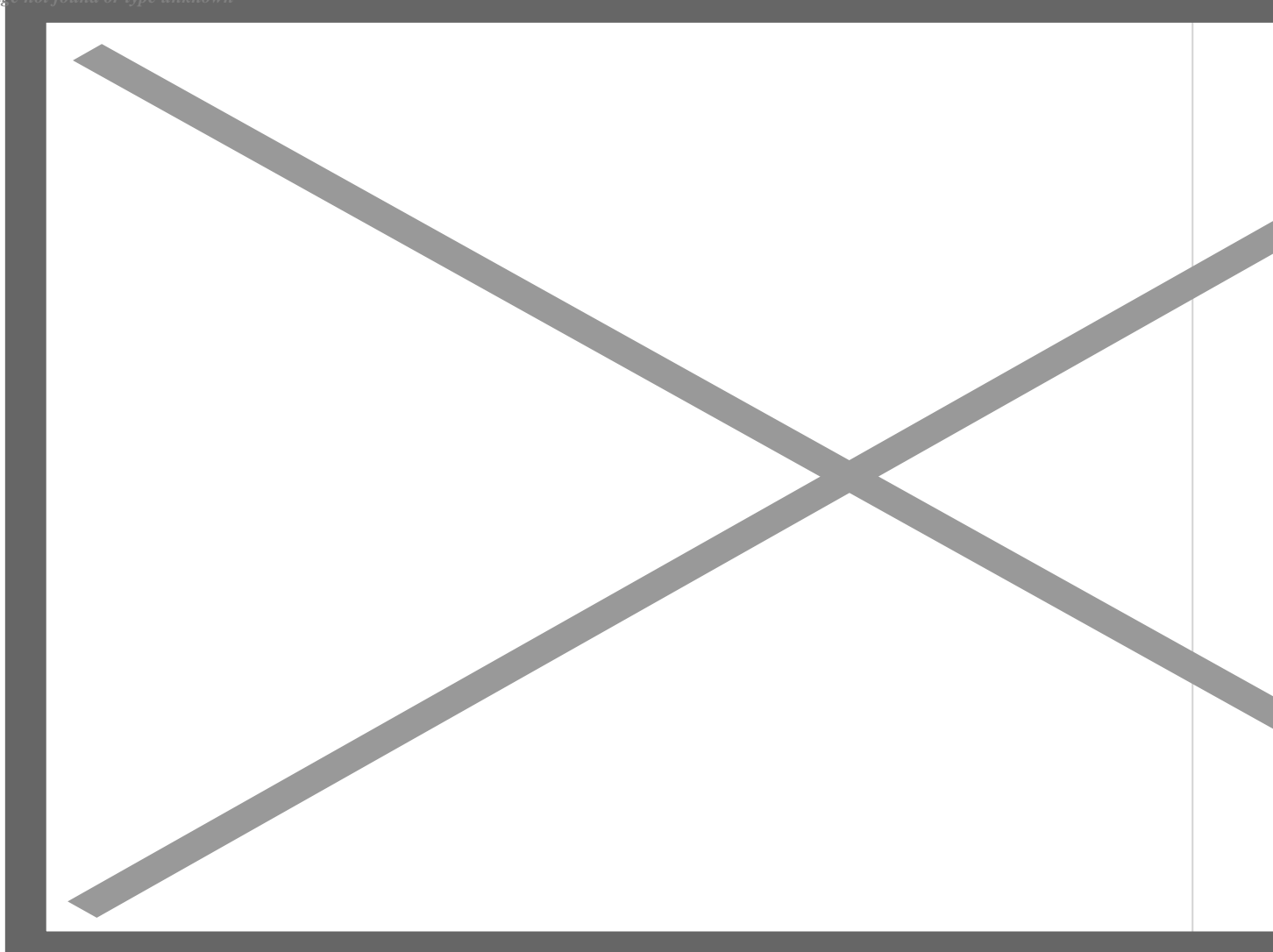


South Africa hosts BRICS virtual meeting on Gaza as proposed by Iran's president

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Pretoria, November 21 (RHC)-- Upon a proposal by Iran's President Ebrahim Raeisi, the leaders of the BRICS group of emerging economies are holding an emergency virtual meeting to discuss Israel's ongoing onslaught against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

"Leaders of the BRICS countries -- Brazil, Russia, India and China -- will gather [under the South African presidency] for an emergency virtual meeting, inviting the leaders of the [new] BRICS countries - Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates," the South African president's office said in a statement on Monday.

The statement added that South African President Cyril Ramaphosa is scheduled to deliver the opening remarks at the BRICS extraordinary meeting on Tuesday. It also noted that the six member and invited states will deliver separate statements on the current humanitarian crisis in Gaza as the Israeli regime continues its relentless attacks on the besieged Strip.

UN Secretary General António Guterres will attend the meeting and the participants are expected to issue a joint statement.

Back in August, the South African president announced that the BRICS group agreed to admit Iran, Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, the UAE and Saudi Arabia as new members.

Ramaphosa added that the five current member states have reached a "consensus on the first phase of this expansion process" and have invited the six states to become new members of the BRICS group from January 1, 2024.

Israel waged the war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas carried out the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying entity in retaliation for intensified Israeli crimes against Palestinians.

Israel has so far killed at least 13,300 Palestinians, including more than 5,600 children and 3,550 women, in its relentless bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

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