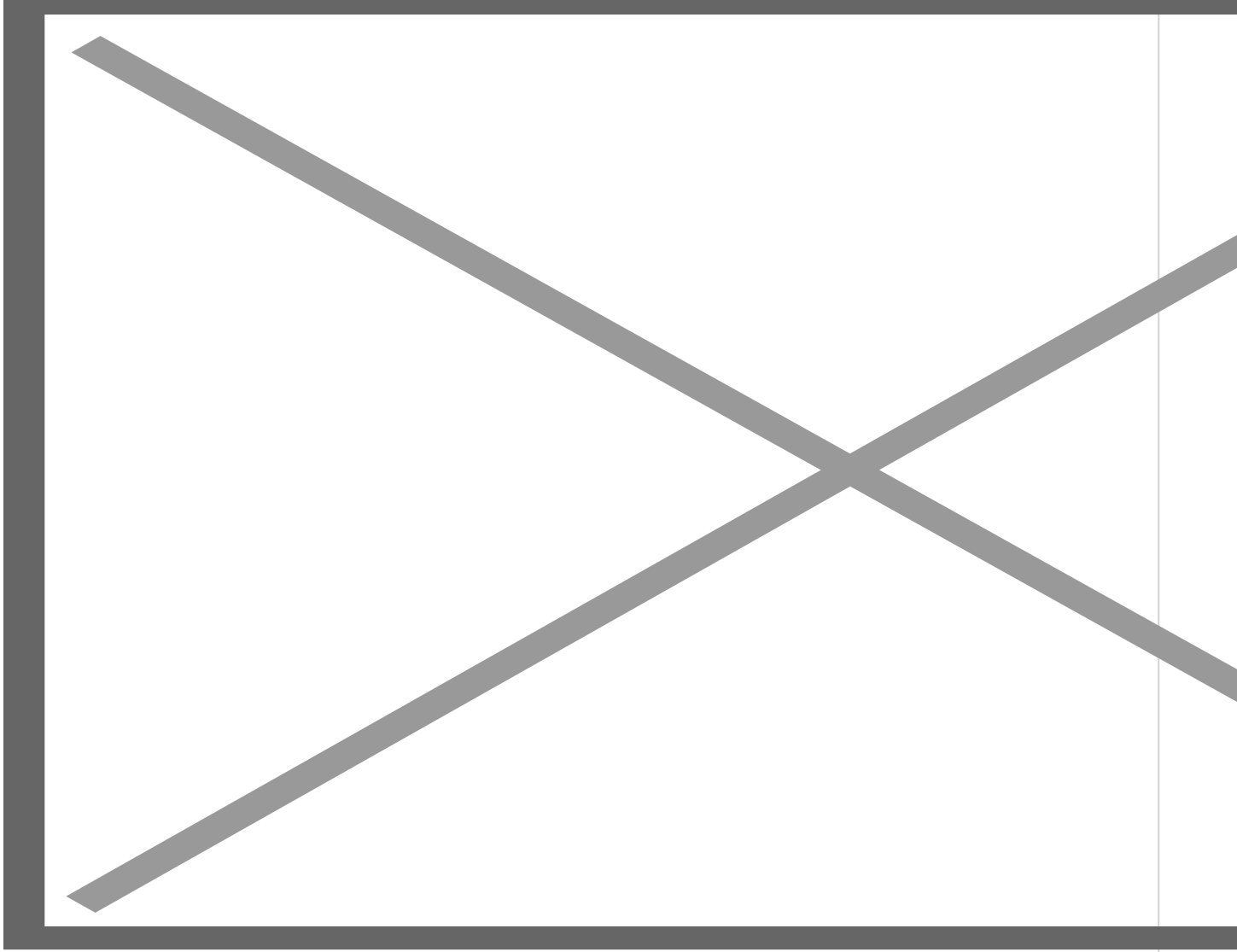


Washington casts only no vote, blocking UN Security Council resolution calling for Gaza ceasefire

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Voting NO -- U.S. Deputy UN representative *Robert A. Wood* said that his government does not support a ceasefire in Gaza.

United Nations, December 8 (RHC)-- The United States on Friday vetoed a UN resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in war-torn Gaza amid growing concern about the civilian death toll there. Washington cast the only "no" vote -- blocking the resolution.

Thirteen countries were in favor of the resolution while the United States vetoed and the UK abstained.

A draft version of the resolution, presented by the United Arab Emirates, had called for "an immediate humanitarian ceasefire," as well as "the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages" and "ensuring humanitarian access," according to a draft copy.

At least 97 other countries joined in the effort, co-sponsoring the UAE-drafted bill.

The U.S. previously signaled disapproval of the draft text. One of the council's five permanent members with veto power, the U.S. has repeatedly opposed calls for a "ceasefire," emphasizing what it claims is Israel's right to defend itself following Hamas' terror attack.

Language about hostages still held by the Palestinian militant group in Gaza was added to the draft resolution in hopes of appealing to the United States.

The vote was the sixth attempt by the 15-member group to reach a consensus on the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas. Only one previous vote was successful, which called last month for "humanitarian pauses and corridors" to be established in Gaza.

Friday's vote followed UN Secretary-General António Guterres' rare invocation of Article 99 of the UN charter, which allowed him to call a Security Council meeting on an "issue that may aggravate existing threats to the maintenance of international peace and security."

The powerful tool hadn't been used since 1989.

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