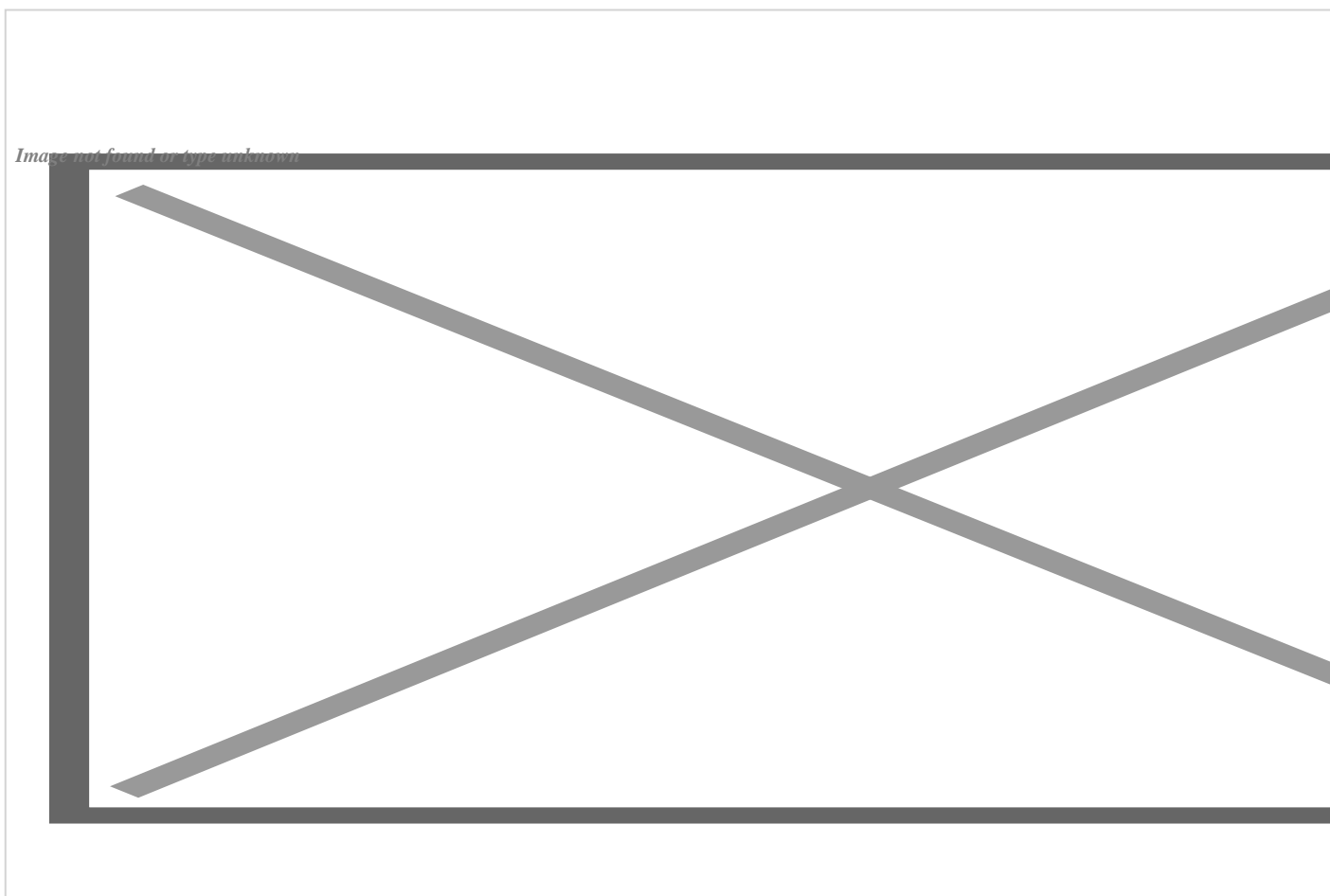


Palestine to apply for joining BRICS after October summit



Moscow, August 27 (RHC)-- Palestine is to apply for joining the BRICS organization following the body's next summit that is slated to be held in Russia in October, says the Palestinian ambassador to Moscow.

"We will send an application for joining this association" following the summit, which is scheduled to be held in the western Russian city of Kazan from October 22 to 24, the envoy, Abdel Hafiz Nofal, told a news conference in the Russian capital on Monday.

Nofal said Russian President Vladimir Putin had invited the Palestinian Authority's President Mahmoud Abbas to attend the event, calling the invitation a "positive message" and a token of support for the Palestinian people.

Putin promised that the summit would devote an entire session to the issue of Palestine, the ambassador stated, adding, "We have the most positive expectations from this summit."

The intergovernmental organization features Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates. The bloc, which is often seen as an alternative to the Western

economic and political hegemony, comprises almost 46 percent of the global population, 36 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP), and 25 percent of the global trade measured in terms of exports.

Observers say Palestine's potential membership of the body would help promote the member states' economic cooperation with Palestinians, who have been subject to substantial funding cuts on the part of the United States over the past years.

The prospect would also translate into enhanced political support for Palestine, which is recognized as a state by all of the BRICS' components, they note.

The organization has already expressed support for Palestinians in the face of the Israeli regime's ongoing atrocities on several occasions. Back in June, BRICS' foreign ministers condemned the atrocities, especially the regime's genocidal war against the Gaza Strip.

"The ministers expressed grave concern at the deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular the unprecedented escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip as a result of the Israeli military operation that led to mass civilian displacement, death and casualties, and destruction of civilian infrastructure," they said in a joint statement.

At least 40,435 Palestinians, most of them women and children, have been killed so far during the Israeli war that was launched following a retaliatory operation staged by the coastal sliver's resistance groups last October.

Nofal said Putin's invitation to Abbas also "means that despite all the crimes, killings, and destruction in the Gaza Strip, our message is that Palestine wants to live and to develop."

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