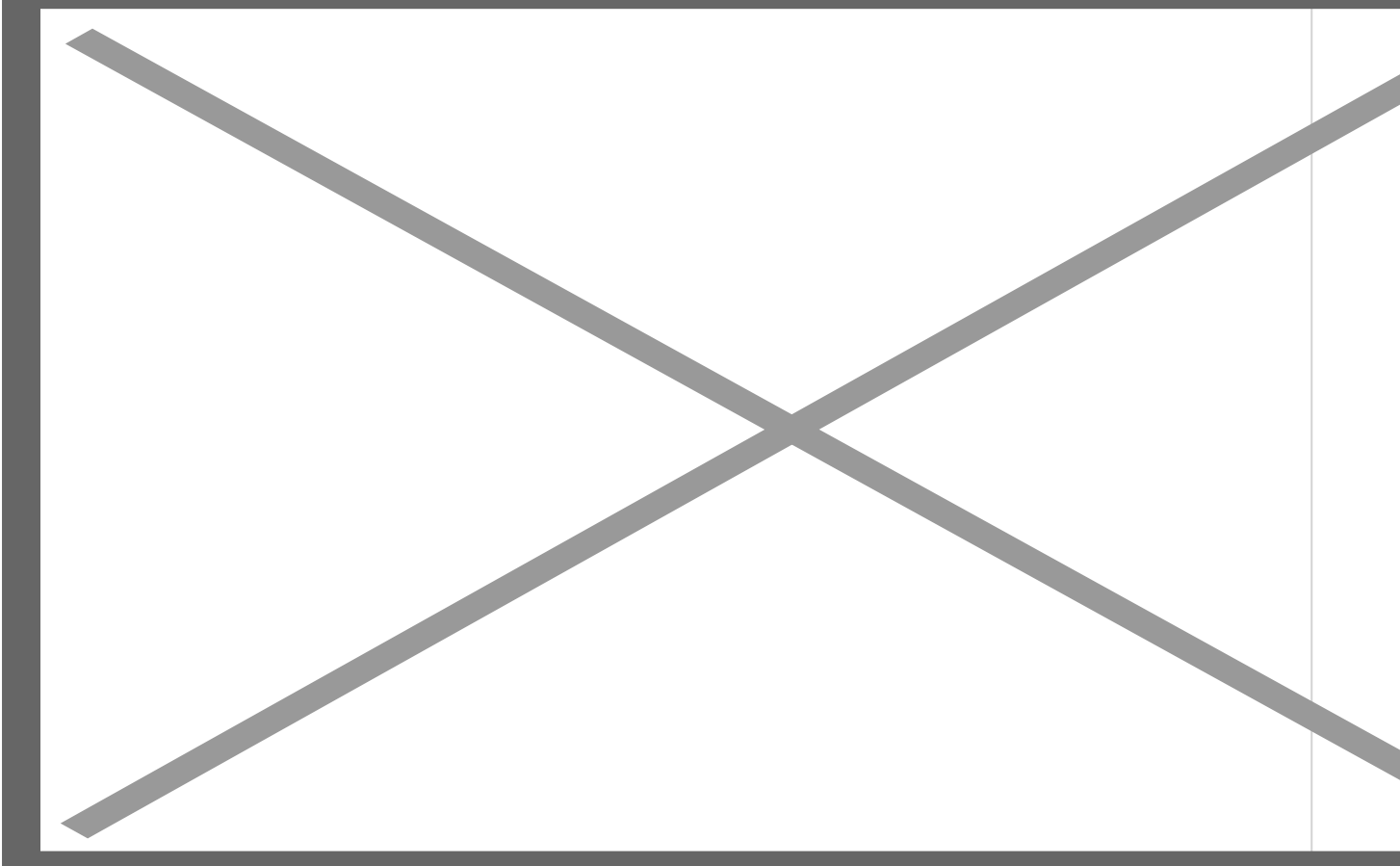


Colombia's new government reestablishes ties with Western Sahara

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This photo, shared on Twitter, shows Colombian President Gustavo Petro, center, meeting with the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in Western Sahara delegation.

Bogota, August 12 (RHC)-- Colombia's new government has reestablished relations with the self-declared Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in Western Sahara, which is under attack by Morocco, an ally of Washington.

Media reports said the new administration of Colombian President Gustavo Petro sought to maintain ties with the Polisario Front, which rules the Western Sahara region and is composed largely of indigenous nomadic inhabitants of Western Sahara, the Sahrawis.

Petro, a former fighter of the now demobilized M-19 rebel group, was recently sworn in as Colombia's first leftist president. The 62-year-old took his oath of office on Sunday, vowing to unite the polarized nation.

Colombia is part of the elite Latin American club that has gone to the left and away from Western dominance, particularly by the United States. Colombia had been Washington's top Latin American ally for decades.

On December 10, 2020, Morocco and Israel agreed to normalize relations in a deal brokered with the help of the administration of former US President Donald Trump. Morocco became the fourth Arab state to strike a normalization deal with the regime. The others were the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan.

Donald Trump sealed the agreement in a phone call with Morocco's King Mohammed VI. As part of the agreement, Washington agreed to recognize Morocco's sovereignty over the Western Sahara region, which has been at the center of a dispute with neighboring Algeria.

The Algerian Foreign Ministry later rejected Trump's stance, saying the U.S. decision "has no legal effect because it contradicts UN resolutions, especially UN Security Council resolutions on Western Sahara."

The Algeria-backed and pro-independence Polisario Front has also rejected "in the strongest terms" Trump's stance on the disputed desert region, stating that Trump had attempted to give to Morocco "that which does not belong to it."

The agreement with Israel drew condemnation from the Palestinians, who termed it a "stab in the back" and a betrayal of their cause.

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