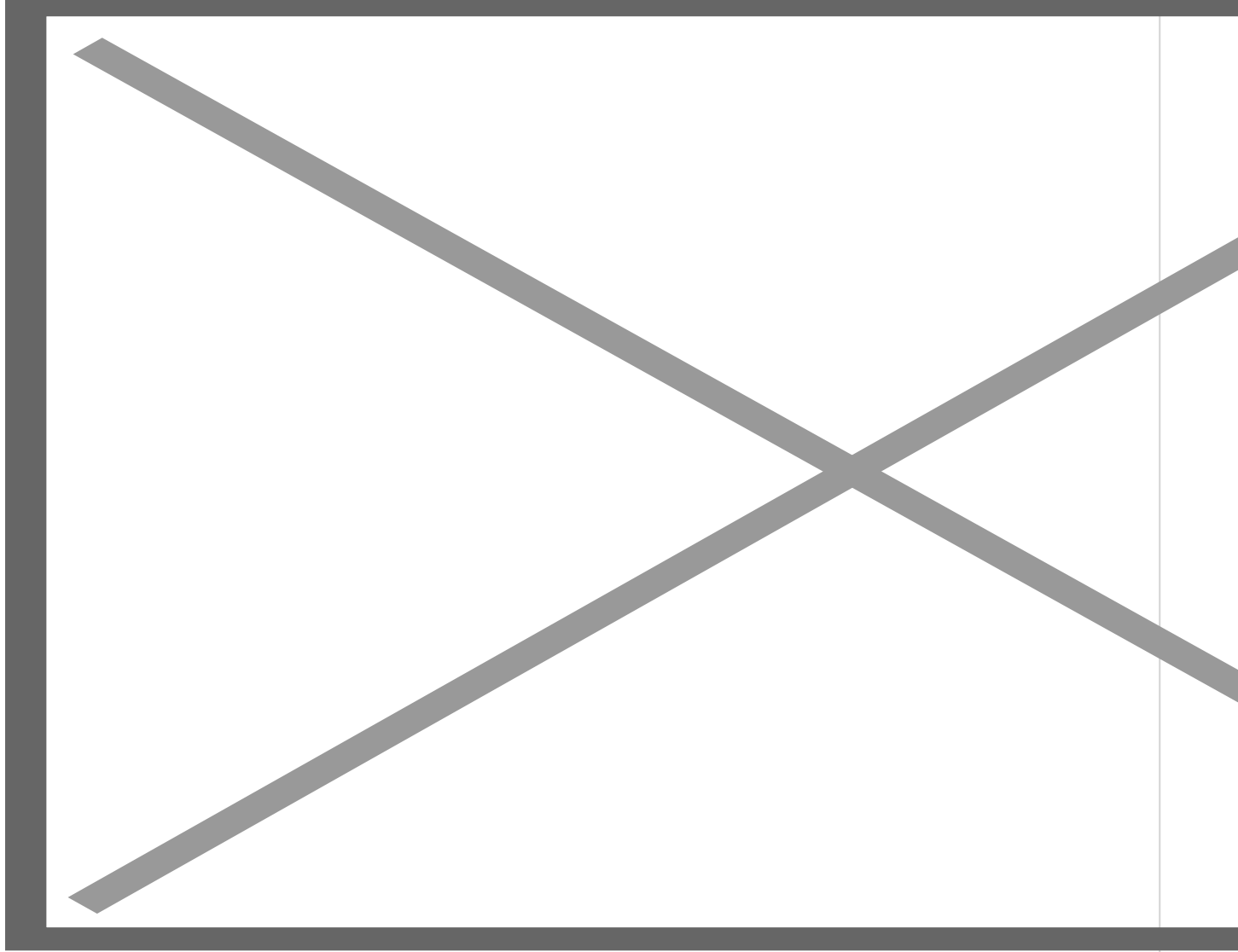


U.S. pressures UN not to sanction companies doing business in illegal Israeli settlements

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U.S. calls on UN not to sanction companies doing business in illegal Israeli settlements?

Washington, December 10 (RHC)-- The United States has acknowledged pressing the United Nations not to impose sanctions on companies doing business in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. The U.S. State Department issued the statement on Friday days after Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the Biden administration would oppose Tel Aviv's land grab policy in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The State Department said that it had approached the UN human rights office with concerns about the blacklist, whose first publication in 2020 incensed Israel, AFP reported. The United States "continues to oppose any work to update it" and has raised concerns "directly with the Office of the High Commissioner" for rights, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel told reporters.

"Our view is that this database only serves to reinforce an anti-Israel bias that too often finds traction in UN venues," he said. "Also, this database poses a genuine threat to companies doing business or considering business operations in the region," he added.

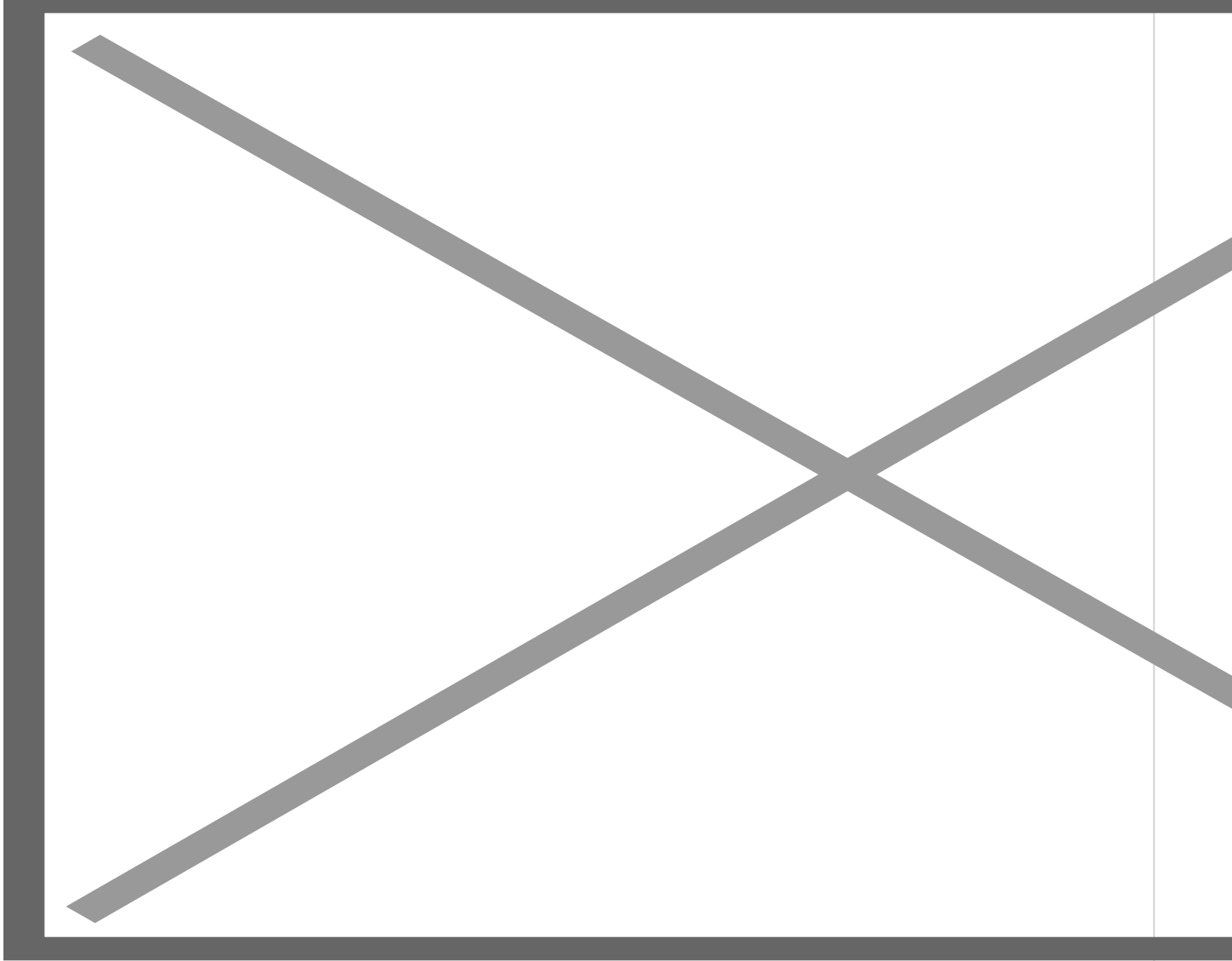
The administration of former President Donald Trump had reversed longstanding US opposition to illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank, and denounced the initial publication of the blacklist -- which listed US companies including Airbnb, Expedia and TripAdvisor.

Blinken said that Washington would judge Benjamin Netanyahu's incoming regime by actions and not personalities. Controversial Israeli politician Netanyahu is likely to return to power after striking a coalition deal with the extreme-right outfits including Religious Zionism, which could be put in charge of constructing illegal settlements and the Tel Aviv regime's land grab policies in the occupied Palestinian territories.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East al-Quds. All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. The UN Security Council has condemned Israel's settlement activities in the occupied territories in several resolutions.

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent state with East al-Quds as its capital.

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