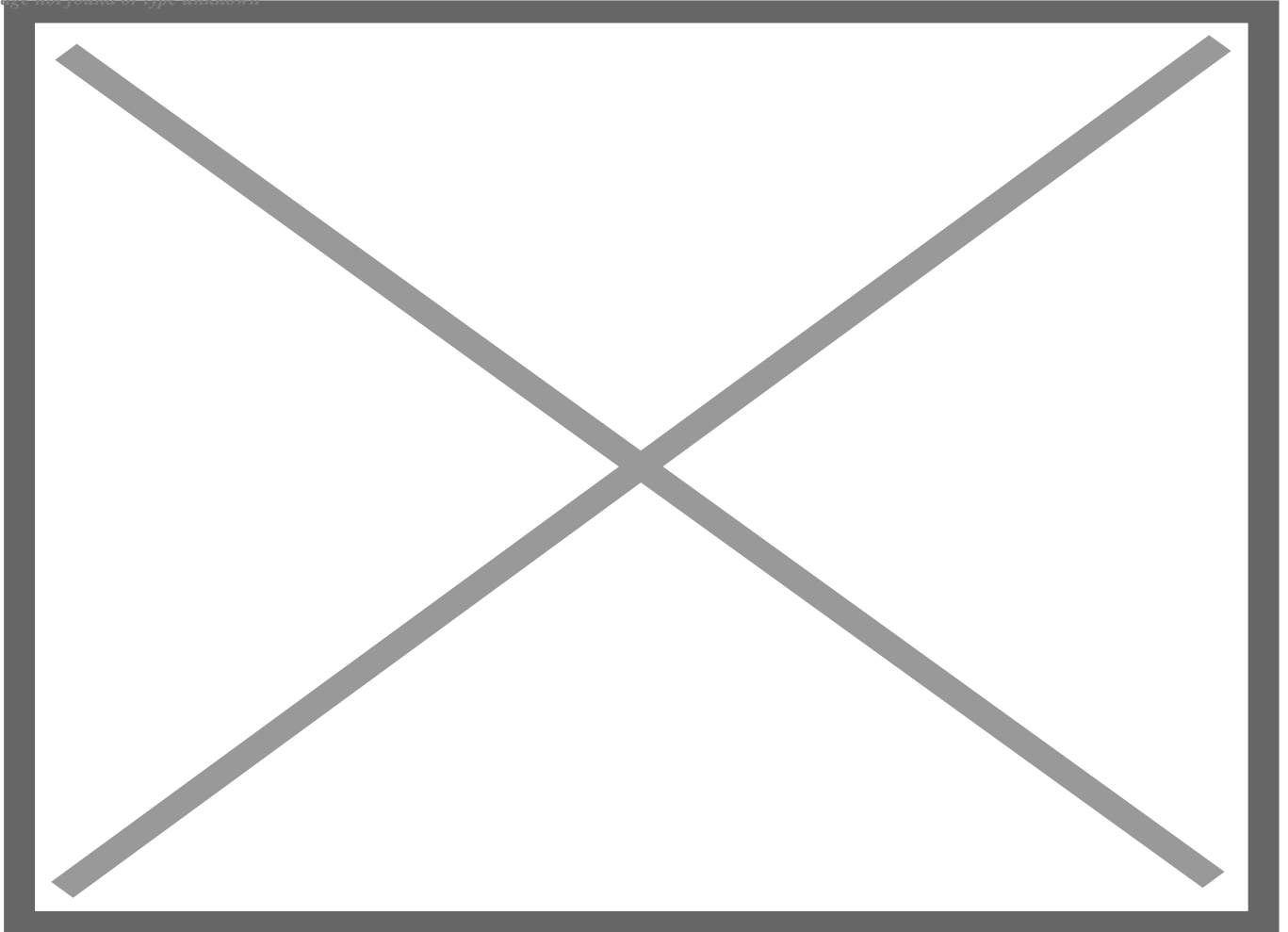


The calm of Blinken

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**Antony Blinken meets with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas. Ramallah, in the West Bank
EFE/EPA/Majdi Mohammed / POOL**

By Roberto Morejón

Flaunting his supposed conciliatory role in the Middle East, the U.S. Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, visited the occupied West Bank and Israel, an opportunity in which he called for calm, without the slightest accusation to Washington's main gendarme in the region for the terror unleashed.

Blinken expressed what he called "deep concern" over the escalation of violence in the Middle East, characterized by Israeli repression, although he did not explain it that way.

The visitor admitted that Palestinians face what he called a "shrinking horizon of hope" for a two-state solution to the conflict with Israel.

A day after meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem, the head of U.S. diplomacy met in the West Bank city of Ramallah with Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Beyond urging a reduction in tensions, Blinken offered no peace initiatives as Israeli forces continue to take actions in East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank that have claimed the lives of 35 Palestinians in January alone.

While Abbas called on the Americans to put pressure on the Zionist regime to stop its crimes, they have limited themselves to vague appeals for appeasement.

Not even President Joseph Biden when he visited the region earlier spoke of new talks between Palestinians and Israelis.

Observers wondered what are the results of the Secretary of State's trip to the area in the midst of the Israeli onslaught, if he has nothing clear to offer.

All the more so when Netanyahu's new far-right government promised to adopt a tough stance against the Palestinians and to increase settlement construction, considered illegal by the international community.

Moreover, to coincide with Blinken's trip, Israel greeted him with a slew of new decisions to combat what it described as terrorism.

These include the revocation of Israeli identity cards from people suspected of collaborating with the Palestinians and from Arab residents in occupied East Jerusalem.

Both for the above and for the addition of 500,000 Jewish settlers in illegitimate settlements, Israel should be put in the dock.

But Blinken calls for calm.

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