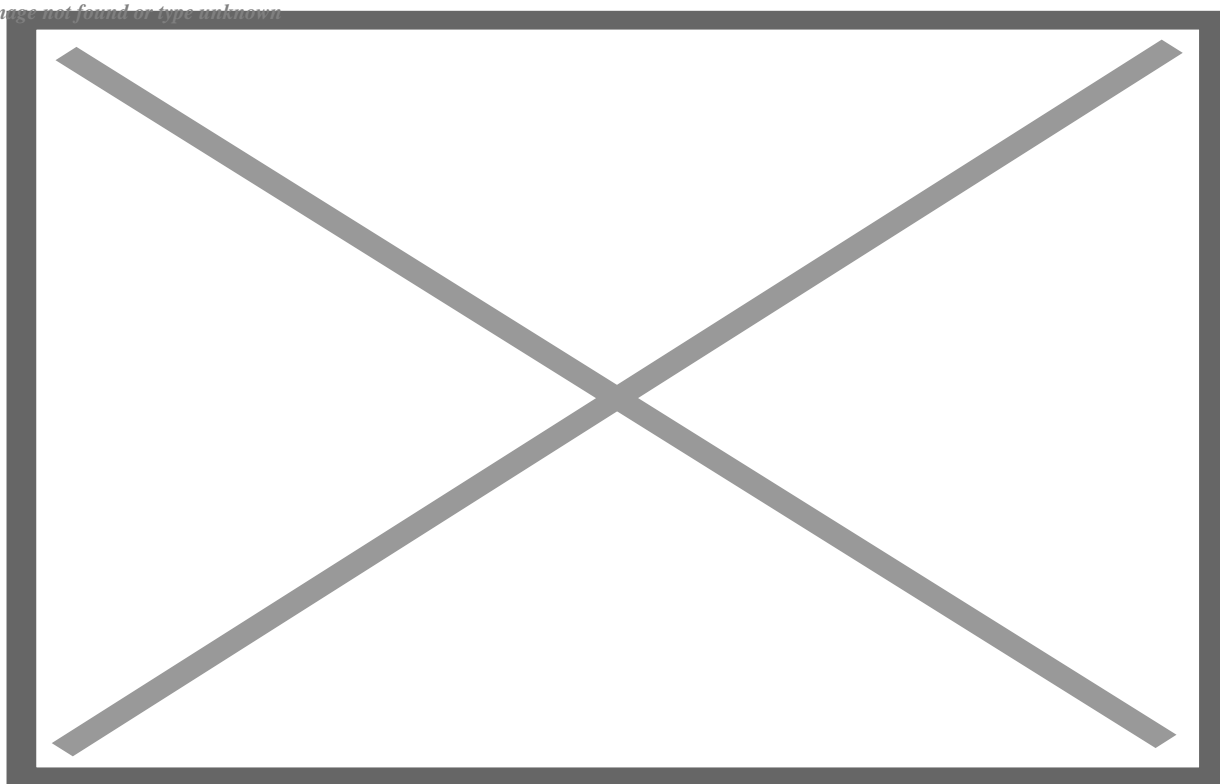


U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken set to travel to Israel again

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U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken cuddles up to his buddy, Benjamin Netanyahu

Washington, November 1 (RHC)-- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to Israel at the end of the week, the Department of State has announced, as tensions remain high amid Israel's escalating war against Hamas in Gaza.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said on Wednesday that Blinken will begin his trip on Friday, his second to the region in less than a month, with a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the itinerary.

“He will reiterate US support for Israel’s right to defend itself, in accordance with international humanitarian law, and discuss the need to take all precautions to minimise civilian casualties, as well as our work to deliver humanitarian assistance,” Miller told members of the press.

Blinken’s planned visit comes as Israel steps up aerial bombardment of Gaza and slowly increases ground operations within the strip, where Israeli air raids and a restrictive siege have created dire humanitarian conditions.

Jordan recalled its ambassador from Israel on Wednesday, stating that they would not return until Israel suspended its assault.

Israel has rejected growing calls for a ceasefire and has said that it is fighting to topple the Palestinian group Hamas, which launched a deadly attack on southern Israel on October 7 that Israeli authorities say killed more than 1,400 people, most of them civilians.

Rights groups, international organizations such as the UN, and neighbouring countries such as Jordan have drawn attention to the devastating effect Israel’s attacks and harsh siege have had on the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, where authorities have said 8,796 people have been killed, more than a third of them children.

Arab countries condemned an Israeli attack on the densely populated Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza on Tuesday, which levelled an entire block of apartments and killed dozens of people, according to Palestinian authorities.

Health services have also been pushed to their limits, or been shuttered, in Gaza, as Israel’s siege chokes off access to necessities like fuel, electricity, and medical supplies.

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