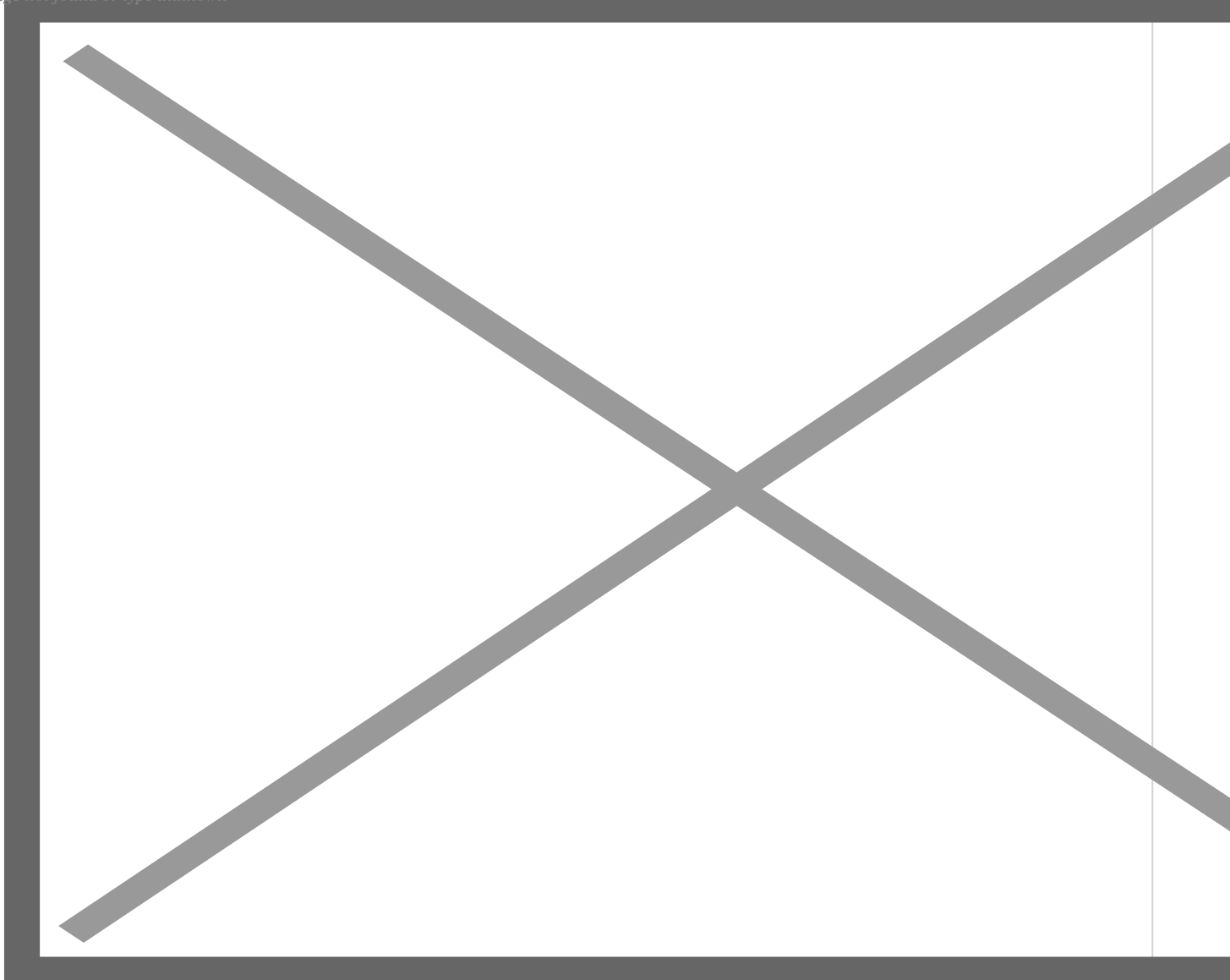


Iranian President Raeisi skips Dubai summit due to Israeli attendance

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Tehran, December 1 (RHC)-- Iran's President Ebrahim Raeisi will not attend the UN's COP28 climate summit in Dubai because of the presence of Israeli president Isaac Herzog, official news agency IRNA reports. President Raeisi had been invited to the summit during UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan's meeting with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on the sidelines of the Friends of BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting in Cape Town in June.

"Due to the invitation of the officials of the Zionist regime to attend the United Nations climate change meeting, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not participating" in the event, IRNA said on Thursday. Minister of Energy Ali Akbar Mehrabian had instead left for the United Arab Emirates to outline Iran's position on the ways to deal with air pollutants, it added.

Earlier Thursday, Amir-Abdollahian expressed Iran's thanks for the UAE president's invitation in a phone conversation with Sheikh Abdullah, during which he explained Iran's reservations about the presence of Israeli officials.

"While understanding the UN's COP28 climate summit being held under the chairmanship of the UAE, the presence of the authorities of the occupying regime of Israel in the meeting is worthy of serious consideration in view of the recent war crimes and genocide of the Zionist regime," he said.

An Israeli delegation of 28 officials will attend this year's annual United Nations climate summit COP28, which kicked off Thursday. It is reportedly down from the 1,000-strong group the foreign ministry had originally planned to send, including Herzog and hardline prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Amir-Abdollahian touched on the temporary ceasefire in Gaza, saying "the Islamic countries must continue their efforts to completely stop the war crimes of the Zionist regime and open wide routes for sending humanitarian aid to Gaza". The Iranian foreign minister also said the UN Security Council is expected to fulfill its duties towards the Palestinian people by issuing an effective resolution.

Sheikh Abdullah explained his country's efforts to establish a ceasefire, saying the UAE will make every effort to continue the truce and step up the sending of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

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