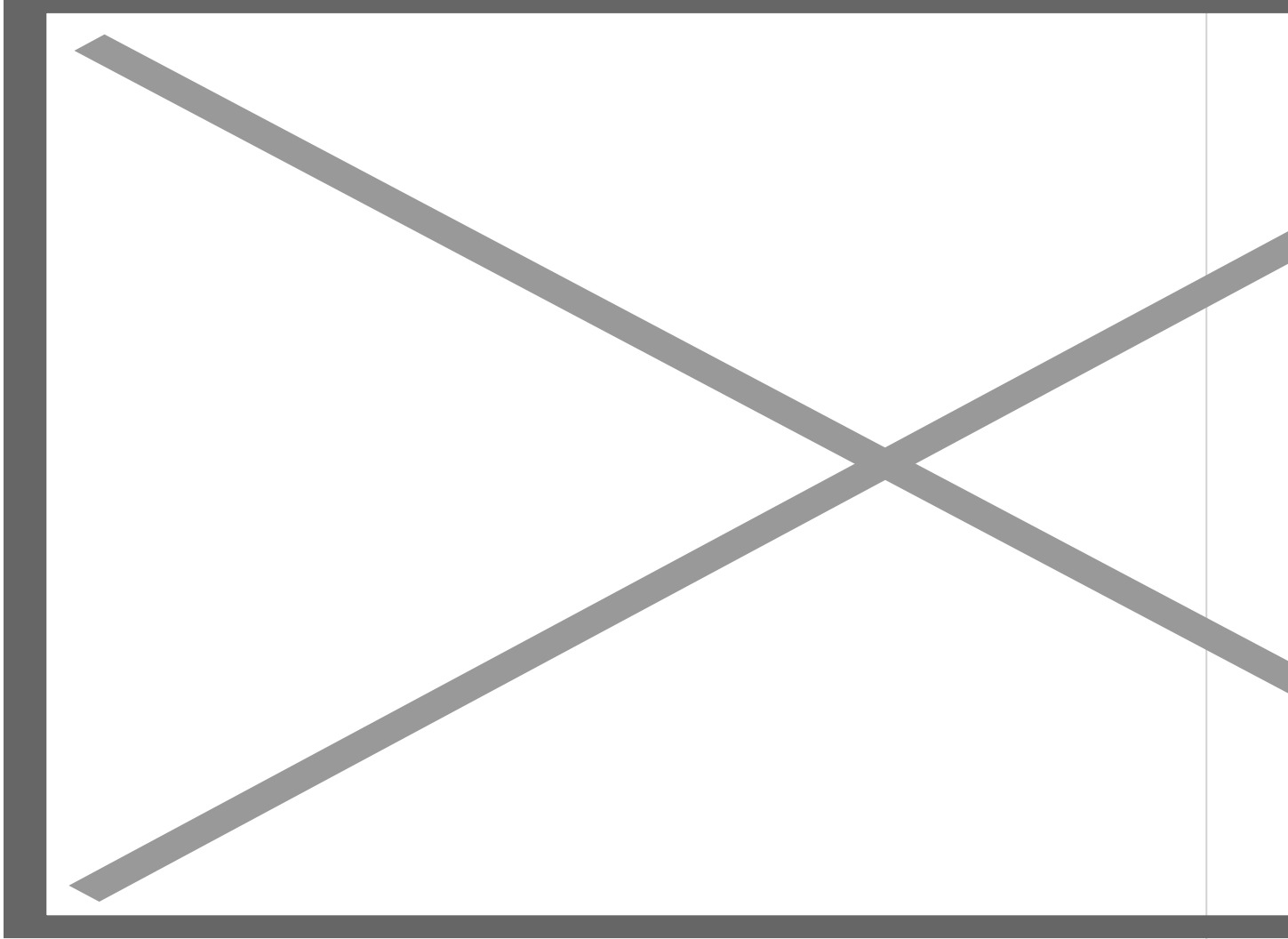


Arab ministers reiterate call for immediate ceasefire and denounce countries for failing to do so

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Arab-Islamic Summit Ministerial Committee holds meeting in Washington (Asharq Al-Awsat)

Washington, December 9 (RHC)-- A delegation of Arab ministers met with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday afternoon and reiterated their call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and cast aspersions on members of the international community — like the United States — for failing to advocate for one.

"One of the disturbing factors of this conflict is that ending the conflict, ending the fighting, doesn't seem to be the main priority for the international community, or at least this is something of dispute," Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud said at a news conference in Washington, DC. The top Saudi diplomat was joined by counterparts from Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority.

They strongly condemned the Israeli offensive, with Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi saying it was "jeopardizing not just the security of the region, it's jeopardizing the standing of the United States and other Western friends of ours in our region."

"It is also creating an environment in the region where the amount of hatred that's growing by the day, as a result of what we see unfolding in Gaza, is undoing 30 years of work that we all have invested in to normalize the idea of peace," Safadi said. "So basically, Israel is also killing faith, not just in the peace process, but in the possibility of having peace and that is not in the interest of Israel."

The foreign ministers said they were not willing to discuss the "day after" solely in the context of Gaza, but rather in the context of a Palestinian state. The delegation also advocated strongly for the passage of the UN Security Council resolution led by the United Arab Emirates that calls for a ceasefire, which the US is poised to veto.

"Our pitch is that people are dying. Innocent people are dying. Innocent children are dying. And that needs to stop. That's a very clear message, I think," the Saudi foreign minister said when asked about the message to Blinken in light of the likely veto.

"If the Security Council fails to adopt a resolution that's simply calling for a humanitarian pause, then it is giving Israel a license to continue with its massacre of Palestinians in Gaza," Safadi said. "All of us are seeing very unequivocally that resolution must be adopted, and action must be taken to curb Israel's aggression on the Palestinians."

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