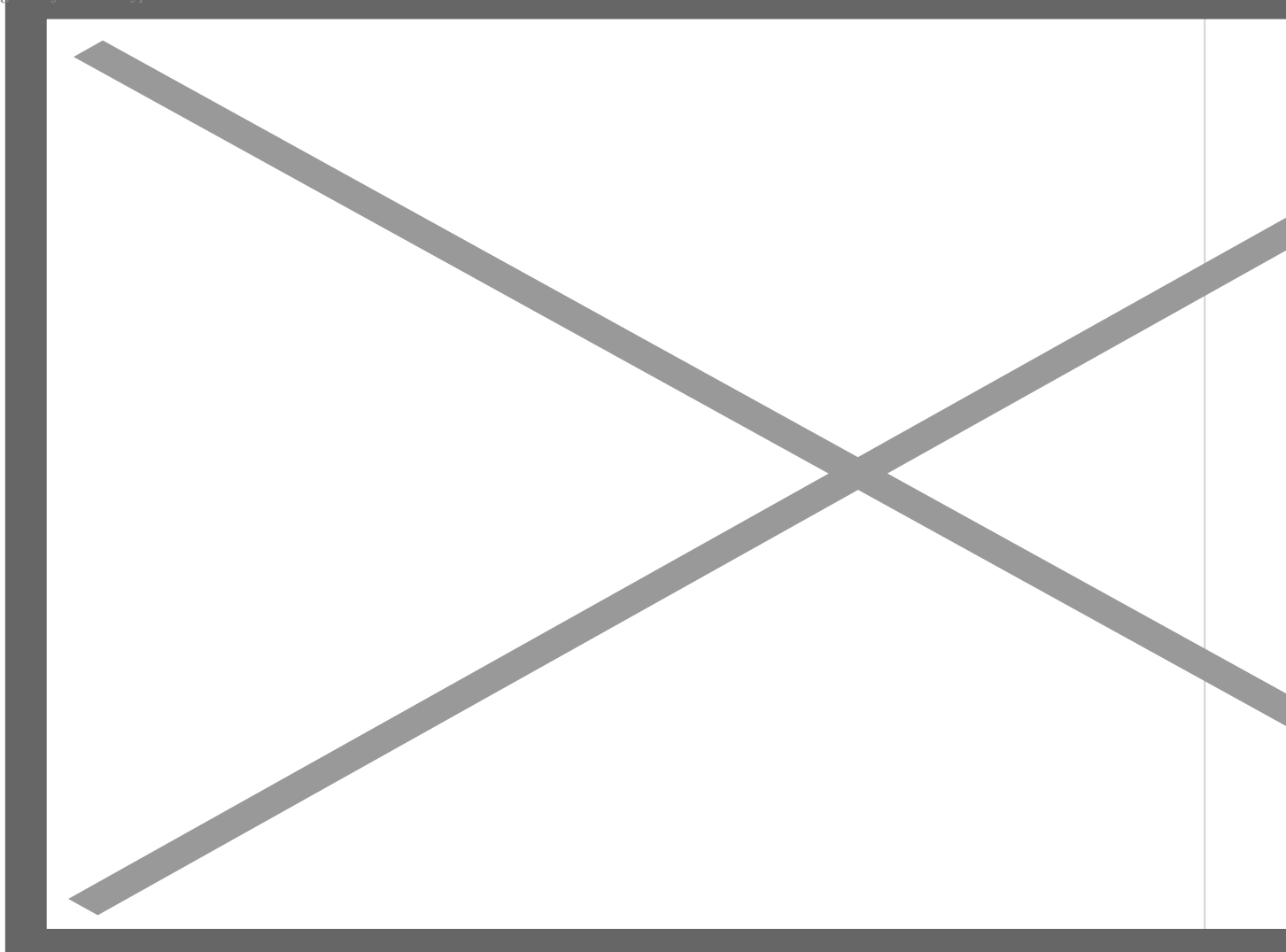


Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian asks for Pope's good offices to help rein in Israel

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President Masoud Pezeshkian of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Tehran, November 21 (RHC)-- Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has written to Pope Francis requesting his efforts to help bring a halt to Israel's barbarism amid the increasing risk of the outbreak of a regional war. In the letter, Pezeshkian urged efforts to establish a ceasefire and to create opportunities for humanitarian aid to be sent to the victims.

Referring to the crimes of Israel in Gaza and their extension to Lebanon over the past year, the Iranian president said "these savage attacks are ongoing without regard for rights and international norms." "Genocide and widespread destruction of urban and medical infrastructure are occurring, with a significant portion of martyrs and injured being women, children, and civilians."

It is "deeply regrettable," the Iranian president stated, that the world witnesses such cruelty and violation of human rights in sacred lands that have been home to great prophets and messengers of peace for all humanity.

Pezeshkian said Iran has been striving to bring a ceasefire and prevent the escalation of war, as manifested by its decision to delay its response to Israel's assassination of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in late July. "Following this incident, we aimed to deliver a firm response based on principles outlined in the United Nations Charter regarding legitimate territorial defense against those responsible for this crime."

However, Pezeshkian noted, "due to persistent messages from Western leaders warning that our actions could jeopardize efforts for establishing a ceasefire, we delayed our response."

"Nevertheless, despite our restraint, the occupying Israeli regime continued its blatant violations of the sovereign rights of regional countries by launching extensive attacks on Lebanon that are still ongoing." Pezeshkian urged the Pope to exert his good offices to prevent further inhumane aggressions and encourage world leaders, not least Christian nations, to contribute to this vital cause.

"Undoubtedly, this action can significantly impact alleviating victims' suffering and addressing those in distress. The Islamic Republic of Iran declares its readiness to assist in this process."

The Iranian president also expressed hope for further expansion of Iran's constructive engagement with the Vatican in pursuit of peace and justice worldwide.

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