Intervento Dassù: Amici Siria a Istanbul, soluzione politica per stop bagno sangue

2013-04-22

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our Turkish hosts for convening this meeting which is a timely follow up to the discussions we held in Rome last February.

Let’s be honest. The crisis in Syria has worsened considerably with no solution at hand. It has reached higher levels of violence and taken on increasingly sectarian tones. Several independent reports have shown that the regime has used all kinds of heavy weaponry against civilian targets just to prevent ordinary life from picking up again in areas no more under its direct control. As a consequence the flows of IDPs and refugees fleeing to neighbouring countries is steadily growing.

It is shameful that we all –the International community- have not been able to stop this tragedy. We ought to do more and to do it quickly; we didn’t. In the eyes of war victims our pledges are just empty words and did nothing to help them escape from violence and death. All this is not only dreadful for the Syrian people. It is putting regional stability at heightened risk and severely hinders our collective credibility.

Despite important gains from the opposition, the military situation on the ground remains at a stalemate. We don’t believe in a purely military solution of this crisis. Especially looking at the post Assad, the political solution, based on the Geneva framework, is the only viable one and the one we should go for. Our efforts to be meaningful must be consistent with the objective of reaching a negotiated slution.

Political Solution. Yes. But we need to get it right.

How? At which conditions?

Number one. We need a stronger Opposition able to play a responsible, meaningful, moderate role in case of negotiations. Able to deliver on the ground. Able to be inclusive.

We consider that the attribution of the Syrian seat to the Syrian National Coalition at the recent Summit of the Arab League was an important step forward. This adds further pressure on the regime. In order to encourage this dynamic and to change the balance of the equation on the field, Italy has decided to step up its political committment and material support to the Coalition.

While providing help we have to encourage the Coalition to be more cohesive, united, and inclusive. These are all extremely important elements as they strengthen the perception that it is a credible alternative to the regime. The concerns of all minorities remains key as a the main driver to foster the Coalition's ability to gain consensus in the Country.

Mr. Monti and other G8 partners were impressed by the pragmatic and constructive presentation in London of the architecture, objectives and roadmap for the formation of the interim Government by the designated Prime Minister Ghasan Hitto.

We wish his plan will be successful and we are ready to support its goals, with a specific emphasis on humanitarian assistance, governance, assistance of local councils. To give you a few examples, upon request by SOC and in cooperation with other relevant International players, we are ready to contribute to the SOC project aimed at rehabilitating some selected border crossing posts and resuming customs inspections.

Italy is also in principle ready to contribute to the soon-to-be-established international trust fund for the reconstruction of Syria and interested to play a constructive role in its steering mechanisms.

Number two. We need Russia on board. Let's be clear here: I know well the level of deception prompted by Russia's attitude. Nobody objects that Moscow should act more responsibly and stop providing vital assistance to the regime. We are aware of that and we'll continue to point it out in our contacts with them. However the infection of Syria is not in Russia's interest, as Russia too fears full fledged sectarian implosion and spill over. We still believe that a deal can be reached and there is a margin of manoeuvre which could be further explored.

Let me conclude by stressing how much the protection of civilians from heinous air strikes and SCUD attacks should become our first and foremost priority. It is not just a moral imperative, but it helps reducing the flows of outgoing refugees thus minimizing the risk of spill over in the region. Cross boder assistance can and must become effective.

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