Syria: Syrian Ambassador “persona non grata” – Massacre in Houla: coordinated initiative by Rome and other European capitals

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A coordinated initiative by Rome and the other European capitals after the massacre in Houla, for which the Syrian regime has been held responsible. The Syrian Arab Republic’s Ambassador to Rome, Khaddour Hasan, has been summoned to the Foreign Ministry and declared “persona non grata”. At the same time, similar measures were announced by the governments of Paris, Berlin, London and Madrid. The Italian Government reiterated its “indignation over the brutal violence against the civilian population, responsibility for which has been attributed to the Syrian Government”. The provision to expel the Syrian Ambassador to Italy was “coordinated with our other European partners and extended to a number of Syrian Embassy officials”.

The measure, which was adopted at the instructions of Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi, also sends out a clear signal of intense dissatisfaction over the Damascus government’s failure to apply the Annan Plan and most notably the failure to cease the violence. The decision followed intensive diplomatic activity by the Foreign Minister and the other European chanceries over the weekend and on into today, Tuesday 29 May. Terzi raised the question of the dramatic situation in Syria with the Secretary General of the United Nations last week in New York. After the massacre in Houla, the head of Italian diplomacy was in contact with our major European partners and the countries of the region directly affected by the Syrian crisis. Terzi discussed with his Turkish colleague, Davutoglu, the need to grasp the opportunity of the Istanbul conference on Somalia taking place on Friday 1 June for a consultation on Syria.

Other details of the massacre

Other details of the massacre in Houla have emerged in the meantime from the UN investigation. The first findings indicate that “most of the victims of the massacre were killed in summary executions, in two separate incidents”. Rupert Colville, the spokesman for the UN’s High Commissioner for Human Rights, added that about 20 of the 108 victims of the atrocious massacre were killed by artillery fire and shots fired from tanks. Most of the other victims, said Colville, had been summarily executed.

Annan in Damascus

The UN and Arab League Envoy for Syria, Kofi Annan, is in Damascus for talks with President Bashar al Assad. Annan, who last visited the Syrian capital in March this year (2012), said he was shocked by the “appalling” massacre and underscored the need to punish those responsible. The former UN Secretary General also appealed to all those bearing arms, so not just the government, to cooperate to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Source : https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2012/05/20120529_ambasciatoresiria/