Talks between Minister Gentiloni and the Coordinator of the High Negotiations Committee (HNC) of the Syrian opposition groups

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Foreign Affairs Minister Paolo Gentiloni held a telephone conversation today with Riad Hijab, former premier and Syrian opposition co-ordinator for the High Negotiations Committee (HNC).

Minister Gentiloni acknowledged the efforts made by the oppositions in exile and the Syrian rebel factions represented in the Committee, as well as Mr Hijab's personal commitment to adhere to the cessation of hostilities, which took effect last night across Syria.

Minister Gentiloni expressed satisfaction for the first positive signals coming from Syria in connection to the enforcement of the truce and encouraged Syrian oppositions to respect it in the interest of the population and in view of the resumption of intra-Syrian peace negotiations.

Minister Gentiloni voiced his personal concern over news of truce violations, urging all conflicting parties to honour their commitment in the interest of the population and so as to not definitively undermine the chances of starting a political process in Syria.

Mr Riad Hijab thanked Minister Gentiloni for Italy's support to the oppositions and to the Syrian people, also through humanitarian aid and the commitments made at the London Conference. Mr Hijab also invited Italy to voice the concerns of the HNC over the consequences, also on civilians, of today's truce violations, which the HNC attributes to the regime and its supporters. Despite these concerns, the HNC Coordinator confirmed the intention over the next few days to honour the commitment made at midnight last night to respect the ceasefire.

In line with numerous Security Council resolutions, both agreed on the urgent and unconditional need to put an end to the sieges and ensure full humanitarian aid access to civilians in need, in addition to releasing all those illegally detained by the regime, especially women and children.

Mr Gentiloni and the HNC Coordinator agreed to keep in contact over the next few days in consideration of Italy's role within the humanitarian Task Force and in the ceasefire brokered

by the ISSG and in view of the hoped for resumption of intra-Syrian peace negotiations in Geneva under the aegis of the Special Envoy, who has been confirmed full support.

Source : https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2016/02/colloquio-del-ministro-gentiloni_0/