Syria: working to boost the Annan plan – risk of genocide if intervention is not rapid, warns Terzi

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Kofi Annan's peace plan for Syria "is not dead", he said as much himself at the end of a meeting of the UN Security Council in which UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, however, affirmed that hopes were fading for the success of the plan such as it is. After a discussion in the General Assembly, Annan said that his plan "has not been implemented", and that diplomatic forces were now aimed at boosting the plan through a new resolution, while the situation on the ground in Syria is becoming increasingly dramatic, not least in light of the shots fired at UN observers and TV reports from around the world describing the latest shocking massacre in Hama; a massacre that, as the White House announced through its spokesperson Jay Carney, has shown the world even more clearly that "the Assad regime is illegitimate" and that the democratic transition of Syria "cannot take place with a tyrant like Assad, willing to ruthlessly murder his own people, in power.

Risk of genocide

"The strategy chosen by Damascus", Minister Giulio Terzi stated, "risks resulting in genocide if intervention is not rapid", and Annan warned that if the international community is not united in bring pressure to bear on Damascus, "the situation in Syria will soon spin out of control". The former UN Secretary General also reiterated that his plan had been designed to allow for a strategic change in the Damascus government. Unfortunately, he added, that has not happened. Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke for the German government, once again calling for the resignation of Syrian President Bashar al Assad and expressing her "horror" at the recent massacres. "Any leadership that allows certain crimes to go on in its country loses all legitimacy. A political solution, an end to the conflict that sees Mr. Assad still in power in Syria is unthinkable", said Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert. The German government then urged the UN Security Council to act more decisively against the Syrian regime. "The attitude of the Security Council will be a determining factor in future developments in Syria", Seibert commented.

A new resolution

The goal now is a new resolution that provides more specific instructions on implementing the plan itself, including a very precise deadline, while the U.S. and the Arab League continue to urge the UN to slap the regime with additional economic sanctions on the basis of Chapter 7

of the UN Charter. A new resolution could be facilitated by the recent “encouraging” signals coming from Moscow: Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov made it known for the first time that Moscow had “never said” that Assad “had to necessarily remain in power until the end of the political process”, and from the Istanbul summit came a clear appeal for Moscow’s involvement; “an essential partner”, said Terzi, who noted “signs that Moscow’s support for the Assad regime is not a foregone conclusion”.

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