Syria: Italy deplores escalation in attacks – The regime must ensure safety of UN Observers, says Terzi

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The escalation of attacks “of any nature and origin” (according to Syrian state TV, 40 people have been killed today, and 170 injured) is making the situation in Syria “extremely tense”. These were the words of Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi, expressing Italy’s firm condemnation of the attacks and making an appeal to stop the violence. Terzi added that “in some clashes the responsibility lies primarily with operations conducted in all parts of Syria’s towns by the armed forces and army, sometimes with the use of artillery”.

The Minister has asked the Syrian regime to guarantee the safety of the UN Observers. “Yesterday’s attack”, he said, “was a serious event because the security and safety of the Observers is a precise responsibility of the Syrian government”. What is needed, therefore, is “the stabilisation and review of security conditions inside Syria”.

Appeal by the head of the UN Observers

The head of the United Nations Observers in Syria, General Robert Mood, has launched an appeal to halt the violence in the country. Mood told journalists that the international community is on the side of the Syrian people. He called on all concerned to bring an end to the violence. General Mood expressed his sincere condolences for all those who had lost their loved ones, and for all those Syrians who live with such tragedies every day.

The UN and Arab League Envoy for Syria, Kofi Annan, also condemned today’s attack in the Syrian capital. “These abhorrent acts are unacceptable and the violence in Syria must stop”, said Annan. “Any action that serves to escalate tensions and raise the level of violence can only be counter-productive to the interests of all parties”.

UN Mission: Italian Government approves decree

In its meeting tomorrow, Friday 11 May, the Italian Government will examine a decree-law proposed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence concerning “Urgent provisions for Italy’s participation in the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), pursuant to Resolution 2043 (2012) adopted by the United Nations Security Council”. Earlier this week the Government authorised a peace mission to Syria by Italian military personnel in the role of “United Nations Observers” and, as such, unarmed.

The mission will include up to 17 people, with the first five arriving in Syria in the week beginning 14 May. Italy has played an active role from the outset in supporting the humanitarian mission launched by the UN under Resolutions 2042 and 2043. And it immediately made available aircraft to airlift vehicles and equipment for the observers deployed in Syria.

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