Syria, Terzi reports to the parliament – Risk of genocide, strengthened observers mission

2012-06-06

“The strategy chosen by Damascus risks leading to genocide if intervention is not rapid”, said Minister Giulio Terzi in a report to the joint upper and lower house foreign affairs commissions. He explained that the Syrian regime “intends to defend itself through an increasingly brutal and direct escalation of terror against civilians and by artificially fuelling infighting between the various components of Syrian society”.

Strengthened UNSMIS mission

Italy continues to stress its support for the Annan plan as a way out, but “we are not entirely confident it will work, results thus far have been very limited”, Terzi admitted, underscoring nevertheless that the UN/Arab League plan “is the one we have and we must make it work”. The international community is also discussing “possible ways of strengthening the UNSMIS mission by increasing the number of observers and their ability to operate in Syria, including their capacity for self-defence”, he added.

Syrian-led political transition

Once a ceasefire is established, “the objective is a Syrian-led transition that is not imposed from any outside agent and is shared by the broadest portion of Syrian society”, in which, however, “it is unlikely that Assad, his brother and his family will have a role that the opposition can accept”, the minister explained, who will participate tomorrow in a diplomatic summit in Istanbul with the ministers of the principal members of the Friends of Syria group: the U.S., Italy, France, the UK and Germany.

Egypt still fragile

As for the presidential elections in Egypt, Terzi pointed out that the first round had confirmed the society’s progress toward democracy, but that “it is necessary to avoid excessive polarization in the political debate”. “What has been going on in recent days in Tahrir Square in the wake of the sentencing of Mubarak and his family members, is an indication of underlying fragility both on the level of democratic development as well as of security”, Terzi explained as he expressed his hopes for “the peaceful transfer of power from the military to civil institutions within the prescribed timeframe”, along with the attenuation of the socio-

economic emergency and resumption of economic development and tourism”. Indeed, Italy considers Egypt “an undeniably strategic partner”, he concluded, announcing a visit to Cairo “as soon as the election cucle has ended”.

On the question of Libya, in light of recent tensions over the postponement of parliamentary elections initially set for 19 June: “We are confident that it will be possible to hold elections in Libya by the start of Ramadan on 20 July”, the minister said.

Source : https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2012/06/20120606_sirgenparl/