Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (Italy) — esteri.it

Italian delegation in Damascus meets the interim government. Crisis cell set up for security during Christmas celebrations

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ROME – The first high-level Italian delegation after the fall of Bashar Al Assad's regime held a series of meetings with the new de facto Syrian authorities yesterday and today in Damascus. The delegation was made up of the Director for the Mediterranean and Middle East at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Maurizio Greganti and the Director for Development Cooperation Carlo Batori, assisted by the Head of Mission to Damascus Stefano Ravagnan.

During the meeting with the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Assaad Hassan Al Shibani, the envoys Greganti and Batori were informed that the Interim Administration had set up a 'crisis cell' to oversee events in the country related to the celebration of Christmas and other events in the Christian community.

On the instructions of Minister Antonio Tajani, the Italian diplomats reiterated how important it is for Rome that a new political process, inclusive and non-sectarian, respectful of all of Syria's components, including the religious ones, be launched in the country. According to Tajani, "Italy requests that the new Syrian leadership guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Syrians, especially women. The role of Christians in Syria, as full-rights citizens, must be recognised and valued".

According to Tajani, "Italy has an open attitude towards the new direction being taken in Syria. Italy has always been close to the Syrian people, especially from a humanitarian point of view, as was particularly the case during the tragic earthquake that struck the country in 2023".

The prospects for relations with the current de facto authorities, also with a view to a reconsideration of the sanctions regime supported by the European Union, will be determined by the concrete initiatives resulting from the commitments undertaken at the domestic and international levels.

Furthermore, Italy deems it essential for the new de facto authorities to preserve Syria's territorial integrity, as well as to adopt a constructive attitude towards all neighbouring countries and at the regional level.

Italy considers it fundamental to safeguard the full independence of the new Syria, safe from any external interference. In this context, it appreciates the announced commitment of the new Authorities to deny terrorist organisations the use of national territory.

The diplomatic delegation stated that Italy is ready to contribute to Syria’s recovery with major cooperation interventions, in particular by enhancing the Italian Civil Society Organisations already present on the ground, and to launch an initial package of initiatives, which Minister Tajani asked to prepare, to be implemented also through a permanent presence of Italian Cooperation experts in Damascus.

Italy will also cooperate with the international mechanisms established to ascertain and sanction the crimes committed by the Assad regime.

Source : https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2024/12/delegazione-italiana-a-damasco-incontra-il-governo-provvisorio-creata-una-cellula-di-crisi-per-sicurezza-celebrazioni-natalizie/