Syria: Refugee emergency. Boniver’s mission to Lebanon and Jordan

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“One thousand Syrian refugees each day are now fleeing to Lebanon from the violence in their country. A constant flow that is expected to bring the total number of refugees to at least 120,000, with all the risks that this ‘most serious humanitarian emergency’ entails for Lebanon’s fragile domestic equilibria. The point was underscored by Margherita Boniver, Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi’s Special Envoy for Humanitarian Emergencies, who yesterday began a 4-day visit to Lebanon and Jordan to discuss the refugee problem.

Relieving suffering

“In the absence of a political solution to this incredible situation, for the time being all we can do is seek as far as possible to relieve the suffering of these thousands of people”, underscored Boniver. She added that the goals of her mission include “conveying Minister Terzi’s message regarding the very high priority Italy places on humanitarian aid”.

Half of the refugees in Lebanon are children

The MFA’s Special Envoy began her appointments in Beirut with a meeting with Ninette Kelley, the Lebanon representative of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). “I learned from her that half of the refugees registered in Lebanon are children. All of the possible and understandable complications that this flow entails for a country like Lebanon also need to be borne in mind”.

In addition to her talks with the Lebanese authorities and representatives of the UN aid agencies, Margherita Boniver’s schedule for today includes a visit to the Syrian border to visit a number of refugee reception camps. She will return to Beirut this afternoon to meet the Minister for Social Affairs, Wael Bou Faour, before leaving for Jordan.

Support for the Lebanese and Jordanian Governments

In Jordan, the Hon. Boniver will again be meeting representatives of the government and of the major international organisations and will visit 3 Syrian refugee camps.

The Hon. Boniver will express, in Minister Terzi’s name, Italy’s support and friendship for the Lebanese and Jordanian governments. Their countries are experiencing major and

potentially destabilising repercussions from the Syrian crisis, not least from the sharp increase in the numbers of refugees arriving from Syria.

In the recent past, Italy has provided help and supplies to both governments, both bilaterally and through funding to the UN agencies implementing refugee reception projects. Worthy of mention is the field hospital donated to Jordan, located at the border with Syria inside the Zaatari refugee camp. The hospital treats, on average, over 130 patients each day.

During her visit to Amman, the Hon. Boniver will donate medicines for the treatment of children, a generator and other material to help the hospital with its work

Margherita Boniver’s mission can be set against the background of Italy’s excellent relations with the two countries. In the recent past they have received high level visits from the President of the Republic, Napolitano, Prime Minister Monti, and Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi (Beirut, 27 June). Italy is committed to taking forward the political dialogue with Amman and Beirut, not just to further develop bilateral relations and strengthen their partnership with the EU, but also to promote the stabilisation of the region.

Source :
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