Terrorist attacks in Syria: UN Security Council decision important result of action by Italian government, says Gentiloni

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“The decision of the United Nations Security Council’s decision is an important result of the action by the Italian government”.

This was how the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Paolo Gentiloni, and the Minister for Cultural Assets and Activities and Tourism, Dario Franceschini, expressed their approval of the initiative taken by the United Nations Security Council. Prompted by Italy, the Security Council has issued a press statement firmly condemning the barbaric terrorist attacks that ISIL is carrying out in Syria, including the violent occupation of the city of Palmyra.

“Safeguarding humanity’s world heritage must be a central plank of the international peace initiatives and Italy is working with UNESCO to defend the identity of the nations hit by the indiscriminate destruction of their cultural heritage”, underscored Gentiloni and Franceschini.

In their communiqué, the members of the Security Council stated their grave concern for the protection of the World Heritage site of Palmyra and ISIL’s systematic campaign of destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria. ISIL is carrying out targeted attacks to destroy religious sites and objects findings in both countries.

The risks connected with the financing of terrorist activities by ISIL and other individuals, groups and organisations linked to Al-Qaida are another cause for concern for Security Council members. The money comes from the smuggling of artefacts from archaeological sites, museums, libraries and archives and other Iraqi and Syrian cultural heritage sites. The Security Council underscored the need to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

Together with Jordan and UNESCO, Italy’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations has organised a seminar on this topic which will take place at the UN headquarters in New York on 3 June 2015.

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