Closed Ministerial Meeting on Syria: Aid to opposition. Halt violence, Assad out

2013-02-27

An appeal to the Syrian regime for the immediate cessation of the bombardments and for President Assad to step down, and the promise of increased political and material support to the Syrian National Coalition, recognised as the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people. This was the outcome of a meeting Minister Giulio Terzi chaired of his European and Arab colleagues, including US Secretary of State John Kerry, and a delegation from the Coalition led by its president Moaz al Khatib.

Regime must immediately halt bombardments

“During the meeting”, the final communiqué reads, “Sheikh Moaz al Khatib briefed Ministers on the recent developments on the ground, denouncing the suffering endured by the Syrian people” and the rising number of refugees. The ministers expressed “their distress for the appalling conditions of the Syrian civilian population” and appealed to the regime to “immediately stop the indiscriminate bombardments against populated areas, which are crimes against humanity and cannot remain unpunished”.

Aid to the Coalition and Support for the Syrian Free Army

The ministers also strongly “deplored the unabated arms supply to the regime by third countries” and pledged “more political and material support to the Coalition as the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian People and to get more concrete assistance inside Syria and to provide faster assistance to Local Councils and the Assistance Coordination Unit”. They also underscored “the need to change the balance of power on the ground”. “In this vein, they reviewed their plans for current and future assistance and will coordinate their efforts closely so as to best empower the Syrian people and support the Supreme Military Command of the Free Syrian Army in its efforts to help them exercise self-defence while assisting the Coalition in its vital role in view of establishing a democratic system where all citizens are equal before the law, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religious and political beliefs”.

Following the Geneva roadmap

The ministers then urged the regime to accept “the political initiative” launched by the Coalition, including “the issue of President Assad’s stepping aside, stopping massacres and freeing prisoners kept in appalling number and conditions”. The goal is to set up “favourable conditions, with clear benchmarks, to facilitate a positive outcome of a negotiated solution, in line with the objectives of the Geneva roadmap”.

Terzi: a positive meeting, determined to make progress

What emerged from the meeting was “a clear determination to make progress” in providing support and assistance to the Syrian opposition, asserted Minister Terzi at the end of the Rome meeting, calling it “important and positive” and according to whom the Syrian regime is committing “outright crimes against humanity”.

Kerry: united to help the Syrian people

“Let us unite our voices in a pledge to help the Syrian people reach the goal of a free and just society. Their goal is our goal, that of a better future”, which however “will not happen as long as Assad remains in power”, stated US Secretary of State John Kerry at the meeting’s end, announcing that the United States would provide $60 million to the opposition.

Kerry thanks Terzi for effective summit, great leadership

“We have done an important task this morning” and it has been “a very effective summit”, Kerry stressed and ,turning to Terzi added, “I want to thank personally you for your great leadership”. Similar gratitude was expressed by president of the Syrian National Coalition Moaz al Khatib to Italy and Terzi for “having organized this important moment”.

Source : https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2013/02/20130227_riusirprogr/