# SYRIA: Italy calls for a stop to violence and peaceful solution. UN examines Annan mission to Damascus

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The position that Italy has taken on the Syrian situation, which is the result of Minister Terzi's policy initiatives in European and international institutional settings, along with the contribution of the diplomatic network, comes down to one immediate objective: cessation of the repression and the possibility of creating "humanitarian relief corridors". The medium- to long-range objective is a peaceful political solution to the crisis "that ensures fundamental rights and legitimate democratic aspirations" and that places the political process entirely in the hands of the Syrian people. This was the motivation for Italy's latest initiative, which was to suspend the activities of our Embassy in Damascus and recall its staff. The gesture was intended to underscore "our firm condemnation of the unacceptable violence being perpetrated by the Syrian regime against its own people" and demand the immediate cessation of the repression, but also to confirm that "Italy will continue to work in support of the Syrian people" and on behalf of a "peaceful political solution to the crisis".

Italy's clear and unequivocal stance endorses the package of proposals presented by UN and Arab League Special Envoy Kofi Annan during his mission to Damascus. The main proposals include: an immediate halt to the violence, access to humanitarian relief and political dialogue. "I presented a series of concrete proposals that could have an impact on the real situation, telling Assad that my main concern was the well being of the people and that we had to take the people as the focus of our efforts", said Annan.

On 16 March the UN envoy will report on his mission to Syria in the UN Security Council, which is preparing to discuss a new draft resolution on the Syrian crisis prepared by the United States and its European allies. Annan also made it known that he had received an answer from the Syrian president on his proposals.

International opinion on what is happening in Syria in terms of the Assad regime's repression is, by now, univocal. Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu outlined a much more serious picture of the Syrian repression than the official one. "To date, there are 9,000 dead. It is being said that, counting the missing, the number is more like 20,000", Davutoglu said in a television interview. "Over 70,000 have been arrested", he added, underscoring that the regime had lost every trace of legitimacy.

The floor, at this point, goes to the United Nations Security Council.

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