Syria: Thirty-eight million euros from Italy to tackle the humanitarian emergency

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Thirty-eight million euros to combat the drama being experienced by the Syrian population. In purely numerical terms, that is Italy's contribution to help alleviate the humanitarian emergency caused by the Syrian conflict. The announcement was made by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lapo Pistelli, who is attending the second Syria Donors' Conference organised in Kuwait under the aegis of the United Nations.

Italy is world's 9th donor, with funding increased by 70%

The 38 million euros in aid envisaged for 2014 to tackle the humanitarian emergency equates to a 70% increase in our support with respect to the 22 million euros allocated in 2013. The package announced in Kuwait makes Italy the world's 9th donor, and the European Union's third, after Germany and Great Britain.

Ban Ki-moon addresses Donors' Conference: half of the Syrian population needs aid

The Second International Humanitarian Pledging Conference on Syria taking place, like the first one, in Kuwait, was organised by the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO). The representatives of 60 countries are taking part, as well as UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from around the world.

Participants at the conference, hosted by the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, include UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, US Secretary of State John Kerry and, for Italy, Lapo Pistelli.

Discussions in Kuwait City focused on efforts to meet the UN's appeal for 6.5 billion dollars to tackle the emergency in Syria. An appeal echoed by Ban Ki-moon, who underscored that "half of the Syrian population, about 9.3 million people, need urgent humanitarian aid".

500 million dollars in aid from Kuwait and 400 million from Islamic NGOs

In the end, conference participants responded to the appeal. On 14 January the Islamic NGOs – led, in terms of amounts pledged, by the British Islamic Relief Charity, with 80 million dollars, the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent (35 million) and Qatar's Thani Foundation

(15 million) – made pledges amounting to 400 million dollars. And today, 15 January, Kuwait itself pledged 500 million dollars.

Other donors to pledge aid during the conference include the USA, with a further 380 million dollars, Saudi Arabia (250 million) and Great Britain (which announced 164 million dollars in new aid).

Humanitarian conference in Rome on 3 February. We can’t talk of Syria’s future without addressing the present, says Bonino

But Italy’s efforts to tackle the humanitarian emergency in Syria do not stop here. On 12 January, following the “Friends of Syria” meeting in Paris, Foreign Minister Emma Bonino announced that an international humanitarian conference will be held in Rome on 3 February at the invitation of the UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, Valery Amos.

“As a country, we insisted that the humanitarian element cannot be viewed in isolation from the political process”, commented Bonino. “We can’t talk of the future if we are unable to restore the Syrian people’s present”.

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