Syria: Bonino, “ceasefire a priority” – UN-piloted 3/2 “humanitarian meeting” in Rome

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The “ceasefire is a priority in Syria, because we are seeing a “gigantic catastrophe” in need of humanitarian access, said Minister Emma Bonino as she met with the journalists of the World Economic Forum. There are “inaccessible areas, people starving to death”, and the massive refugee exodus is making the situation in Jordan and Lebanon critical, she added, recalling that Rome would host the UN-piloted “humanitarian meeting” on 3 February.

Appeal for ceasefire

The appeal was the central focus of the minister’s speech at the International Geneva 2 Conference held Wednesday in Montreux. We are calling for “an immediate ceasefire” to allow access by humanitarian aid to Syria, as a “start to the negotiations. If this conflict continues, it will cast shame on the whole world”, Bonino added.

Bonino-Kerry meeting

How to get aid into Syria was also central to the Minister’s lunch meeting with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. “The images that have been circulating recently show unspeakable tragedies that cannot be described in words. But we do not need photos to realise how tragic this situation is”, the minister underscored during a press conference in Montreux.

A difficult journey

According to the minister, Geneva 2 “is the start of a very difficult journey. The two delegations will repeat themselves, also in tone”. The reconstruction of Syria will be “a long-term commitment, but in the immediate present it is the Syrian government’s responsibility to end the violence”, the minister added.

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