Syria: Terzi meets Ban Ki-moon at UN – A road leading to a solution of the crisis is needed

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The need for firmer pressure on the Syrian regime by the international community in order to find a road leading to a solution of the crisis. That was the key point of the discussion between Minister Giulio Terzi and the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, at the UN headquarters. Both agreed on the need for the UN Security Council to break the current impasse which, as a result of the veto – imposed above all by Russia – has in effect immobilised the situation. They expressed grave concern over the fresh outbreaks of violence in Syria and the serious humanitarian emergency.

During their talk, they also examined the situation in Libya, Sahel and Somalia. The Italian Foreign Minister told the Secretary General that Italy is ready to host the second international conference for Libya.

With the President of the UN General Assembly, Vuk Jeremic, Minister Terzi discussed the main negotiations that the Assembly will be engaging in during its 67th session: Security Council reform, sustainable development and human rights.

Strong support for the Syrian opposition coalition

“I illustrated to the Secretary General the results of the Conference held in Rome last week. A Conference from which a strong message of concrete support for the coalition of Syrian opposition forces emerged, as well as a warning that the Damascus regime must understand that it has no chance of resolving the crisis militarily”, said Terzi at the end of the meeting. He was referring to the meeting between the group of countries most closely involved in seeking a solution to the conflict in Syria and the leader of the Syrian opposition, Moaz Al-Khatib, which took place in the Italian capital on 28 February 2013.

Minister Terzi also confirmed the strong support that emerged at the Rome Conference for the work of the joint UN/Arab League Envoy, Lakhtar Brahimi, in the framework of the diplomatic effort by the international community. The priority goal of that effort is to change the balance of force on the ground by strengthening the opposition, which is viewed by Italy and the main international players as the only legitimate representative of the Syrian people. In Rome, the 11 countries who met on 28 February also discussed the possibility of setting up

humanitarian corridors with a view to helping the Syrian population and relieving the extremely serious humanitarian situation.

Concerns for the Sahel

Minister Terzi and the Secretary General also expressed grave concern over the situation in the Sahel, and the possible expansion of the terrorist presence in North Africa. “If we want to effectively combat the dangerous process whereby terrorist organisations put down roots in the region”, underscored Terzi, “military action must be accompanied by a long-term political project”.

Italy supports the deployment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) “African-led International Support to Mali” (AFISMA) mission, and its possible transformation into a UN mission. Italy has expressed support for the UN Special Envoy for Sahel, a position the Secretary General has entrusted to the Italian Romano Prodi, and is also in favour of the appointment of an EU Special Representative.

Facilitating stabilisation in Somalia

Minister Terzi also raised the question of Somalia with Ban Ki-moon. Here, the institutions set up at the end of the transition process, thanks in part to the concrete help they received from Rome, now need to be equipped with the necessary instruments to effectively administer the country and control its territory. Terzi agreed on the need to promote dialogue and collaboration between the Somali central and regional authorities, as a pre-condition to the effective stabilisation of the country. Italy favours a broad-ranging international strategy that combines humanitarian aid and development with economic partnerships. In this light, the Foreign Minister mentioned the recent Country Presentation on Somalia organised at the Farnesina to identify opportunities for trade and investment between Italy and Somalia.

“Italy hopes to see the mandate of the African Union mission (AMISOM) renewed and is closely following the debate taking place in the Security Council on replacing the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) with a new mission by the Organisation. The success of such a mission will depend to a large degree on the care taken in selecting its leadership”.

Italy ready to host the 2nd international conference for Libya

Turning to Libya, Minister Terzi told Ban Ki-moon that Italy intends to continue playing a leading and proactive role with respect also to the United Nations and to Europe. He also confirmed Italy’s determination, as the leading contributor to the democratic transition in Libya with a total commitment of over 55 million euros, to further strengthen collaboration with the UN mission led by Tarek Mitri.

“The work of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) is crucial in ensuring the cohesion and efficacy of international aid in Libya”, said Terzi. He was speaking at the end of his meeting with Ban, with whom the Foreign Minister also discussed the further opportunity for dialogue and support for the Libyan authorities that the International Conference on Libya that Italy has offered to host would provide.

“Security Council reform can no longer be delayed”

Minister Terzi also met the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Vuk Jeremic, in New York to discuss the main negotiations in which the Assembly will be engaging during its 67th session: Security Council reform, sustainable development and human rights. The Foreign Minister reminded his interlocutor of the results of the ministerial meeting in Rome on 4 February 2013 on the Security Council reform process. The urgency of the reform emerged clearly from that event, along with the common feeling that greater flexibility will be needed to achieve it. Terzi reiterated that Italy and its “Uniting for Consensus” (UfC) partners are convinced that concrete results can only be achieved through dialogue, political will and a sincere spirit of compromise.

“The inability to offer an effective response to the Syrian crisis is the nth confirmation that a reform of the Security Council can no longer be delayed”, declared Terzi at the end of his meeting with Jeremic. “With the meeting in Rome, Italy intends to place this need firmly back on the agenda, to give a renewed impetus to the negotiations in New York and promote greater flexibility and a spirit of compromise, including by other groups of countries”.

Promoting human rights

Minister Terzi also welcomed the important results achieved to date in the General Assembly on the question of human rights. Results that have taken concrete form in the approval of three Resolutions in sectors that have traditionally been a priority for Italy. These are: the Resolutions on the moratorium on and abolition of the death penalty, which received a historic maximum of 111 “yes” votes; on the elimination of the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), or “cutting”; and on freedom of religion. On this last point, Terzi underscored the awareness-raising work done by Italy, as witnessed by the two international meetings promoted by our country in the last 6 months, at the United Nations and in Rome.

Turning to FGM, Terzi congratulated Jeremic on the recent adoption of the UN General Assembly’s first resolution on this issue. Terzi described this as “a watershed” in the international campaign that sees Italy engaged alongside its African partners with the goal of “completely eliminating this horrific practice in the space of a generation”.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development was another topic for discussion. The Foreign Minister reiterated Italy's full support for the work done by the general assembly to follow up on the conclusions of the "Rio+20" final document.

"Italy is co-chairing the negotiations to set up a high-level Political Forum, as decided in Rio; we are taking part in the Working Group on sustainable development goals; and ISTAT [Italy's office of national statistics] is involved in selecting measurement indicators that go beyond GDP. This is all tangible proof of the leading role Italy is playing in the United Nations to promote more sustainable development models", commented Terzi at the close of his meeting with the President of the UN General Assembly.

Source :
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