Syria: the Annan plann remains current, says Terzi

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Italy and France agree on their analysis of the Syrian crisis, which was discussed today in Rome in a meeting between Ministers for Foreign Affairs Giulio Terzi and Laurent Fabius. “It must be stressed that the Annan plan remains current”, and at the same time we need to “ratchet up the pressure on the regime and consolidate the UN mission”, Terzi said at the end of his meeting with his French counterpart. This latter recalled that the upcoming meeting of the “Friends of Syria” – which has Italy’s “convergence” of analysis – would be held in Paris in early July.

Friends of Syria meeting in Istanbul on Wednesday

A meeting of the principal partners in the Friends of Syria will be held on Wednesday in Istanbul on the initiative of the Turkish government, where Terzi and Fabius will join the foreign ministers of the U.S., the UK, Germany and Turkey. The countries most engaged on the issue of the Syrian crisis include current Arab League president Qatar, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The meeting takes place immediately prior to the international conference on counter-terrorism planned for Thursday in Istanbul to be chaired by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Even as the international community increases its diplomatic efforts to end the crisis, Damascus today declared as “unwelcome” a series of foreign ambassadors, including Italy’s, in reaction to the coordinated expulsion of Syrian diplomats from various countries, including Italy. Our country, in any case, had already recalled its ambassador and the entire embassy staff on 14 March.

Meanwhile the UN announced its intention to establish a presence in four Syrian cities, and the Damascus government agreed to grant visas. Director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) John Ging announced today at the end of a humanitarian forum on Syria in Geneva that the Syrian government had made an agreement to that effect allowing access to nine UN agencies and seven NGOs.

Medical kits for 30,000 patients dispatched from Brindisi

Italy also remains committed on the humanitarian front, with medical kits for the treatment of 30,000 patients about to be dispatched from Brindisi. The humanitarian emergency will be the

central focus of an Italian Cooperation Steering Committee meeting planned for 8 June to set the guidelines for the 2012-2014 interventions.

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