

**Dichiarazioni alla stampa del Ministro Giulio Terzi, del Segretario di Stato USA, John Kerry e del Presidente della Coalizione nazionale siriana Moaz al-Khatib su Riunione ministeriale ristretta sulla Siria**

*Roma 28 Febbraio 2013*

*(fa fede solo il testo effettivamente pronunciato)*

FOREIGN MINISTER TERZI: Good morning and welcome to Villa Madama. In particular, I welcome my friend the Secretary of State John Kerry and the head of the Syrian Opposition Forces Coalition, Sheikh Moaz al-Khatib.

In the past few days, the Secretary of State Mr. Kerry stated that this meeting was needed in order to take concrete decisions and this is an appeal to be concrete and to realize how urgent new measures are. And in fact, this is in complete agreement with President Moaz al-Khatib. There is a sense of urgency, and we need to take concrete steps. And these are the grounds for the decisions and discussions in which Italy is involved with regard to the Syrian crisis.

Now, today's meeting here in Rome is based on these considerations, and therefore I accept the request of the Secretary of State to summon the countries that are most involved in the crisis in order to have an operational meeting, open it up to the Syrian National Coalition, because we see the coalition as being the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people.

I thank all the foreign affairs ministers, my colleagues, who have come today. And in the past three hours this morning, we've been saying that we have to shoulder responsibilities that can no longer be postponed. The suffering of the Syrian people is forcing us to go above and beyond the efforts that have been made to now. We must be able to reach a turning point. 70,000 victims are a huge weight on the conscience of the international community. We can no longer allow this massacre to continue. We cannot allow the bombings to continue, and clearly not with SCUD missiles, the massacre, illegal detention. The regime is perpetrating crimes against humanity, crimes against its own people.

And I would like to say what Italy has done up to now. In the past few months, together with our main partners in Europe and together with the United Nations as well, we've taken action on the humanitarian plane in order to alleviate the suffering of 2 million internally displaced persons and thousands of refugees. We've allocated 30 million Euros to help neighboring countries to alleviate this suffering as well. And we've supported the different components of the coalition in seeking a leadership and a unitary program of action. And we want to have a strong convincing alternative to the dictatorship.

Today – as I was saying, today's meeting here in Rome has given us a new momentum. I think that we're taking a step forward, first of all, because we are taking the responsibility to provide not only humanitarian support but material assistance to the coalition as well. This stepped up support must be perceived directly in the Syrian territory through our support to local councils in the liberated areas. And we've also talked about the possibility to open humanitarian corridors and to be closely coordinated with all the countries who've met here today.

Our friend, Sheikh Moaz al-Khatib, has just pronounced the encouraging – some encouraging words on the work that he is doing together with his colleagues, and the opposition has to be able to fully play the role that it has in order to build up a new democratic Syria. He's also told us that they are about to establish a provisional executive body, which should be operating within Syrian soil.

And I wish to close with a warning that was expressed during today's meeting to the regime in Damascus. They have to stop violence, they have to release political prisoners, and they have to clearly enable a democratic and pluralist Syria with the exiting of Assad. Of course, all countries working side by side with the coalition are involved, and we can say that the Syrian people will never be left alone.

And it is a great pleasure for me to give the floor now over to the Secretary of State, Mr. John Kerry. And after his remarks, we'll hear President al-Khatib's remarks. Thank you.