

Urgent initiative to address the situation in Syria

Open letter to the leaders of the nations claiming to be Syria's « friends »

Paris, August 24, 2013

Dear Sir or Madam,

No nation that has ever purported to support the coming about of a free Syria can remain unmoved by the immense human losses and miseries suffered by the Syrian people, or by the geopolitical risk of what is happening: yesterday Qusayr, this week the slaughter of thousands of people in the suburbs of Damascus by chemical weapons, Homs as usual and to morrow Aleppo : the possibility that Bashar al-Assad's regime may defeat the popular uprising is becoming more likely by the day.

After 28 months of exemplary and heroic struggle for freedom, today the Syrian people has been abandoned by the nations that claim to base their governance on the founding principles of democracy and human rights.

And yet...

You know that over 100000 have been killed since the beginning of the uprising. Most of them were civilian, including 5000 children under 16.

One must add to this terrible toll the dozens of thousands of missing Syrians whose families don't know their whereabouts and who will probably never return home.

You know that torture is being systematically practiced on children and adolescents, and that young adult prisoners, both men and women, are being tortured and raped.

You know that sarin gas has been repeatedly used, that the "red line" has been crossed, several times, in the most horrible way a few days ago in Damascus suburbs. and that this has raised nothing but vague declarations, interpreted by the regime as a genuine "license to kill" with complete impunity.

You are aware of the reports of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria of the United Nations Human Rights Council, and of those of NGOs such as Amnesty International et Human Rights Watch. These reports leave no doubt as to the reality of the crimes of war and against humanity committed by the regime.

You know that Russia and Iran are massively arming and providing logistical support to the forces of Bashar al-Assad, and that thousands of Hezbollah warriors are fighting on the Syrian territory.

You know that aviation and rockets are being used against bakeries, hospitals, schools and thousands of homes.

You know that the conflict in Syria cannot possibly be interpreted, as has often been implied, as a confrontation between a dictatorial regime and radical religious groups, since those groups are nothing but a small minority and are not integrated in the Syrian opposition. You know that many political leaders use this excuse to justify their cowardly refusal to support the Syrian people with anything other than words. You know that the risk of a takeover by extremist groups is merely the consequence of the isolation in which we left the Syrian uprising.

You know that if by misfortune Bashar al-Assad should stay in power, he would not fail to bring blind and destructive vengeance upon the opponents, bringing an end to any hope of peace and democracy in the region for a long time.

You know that Bashar al-Assad's despotic and corrupt regime cannot be possibly be reformed, that its repressive force knows no limits, and that it is, by its very own nature, a barbaric state.

- ◆ if a no-fly zone is not implemented in the shortest possible delay, notwithstanding the "technical difficulties" which, incidentally, do not seem to bother the Israeli forces in their repeated interventions in Syria;

- ◆ if the Syrian regime is not isolated diplomatically, thereby facilitating the official intervention of UN humanitarian organizations and a more effective support from the civic administrations and health structures set up by the opponents in the freed zones;

- ◆ if the brigades of the Free Army, independent from radical Islamist groups, do not receive a substantial support,

Then you, leaders of the nations claiming to be Syria's « friends », must know that, by failing to respond to the anticipated massacres, your country will be responsible for failing to help a people in danger. We hope that you will take the necessary steps to prevent this terrible moral defeat of our democracies.