



Berlin, 22/10/2015  
151022\_05\_en

## REMARKS

### Remarks by the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini following her meetings on the latest tensions in the Middle East

---

22/10/2015

Berlin, 22 October 2015

I am happy to debrief you on my meetings today here in Berlin, indeed a diplomatic capital of the day. I have started with a meeting with Minister Steinmeier, where we coordinated messages. First of all we spoke about our recent visits. He has been in crucial visit to the Middle East and it was agreed among us that he would have debriefed me coming back, namely from his talks in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, mainly on the Syrian crisis. I told him about my recent Africa trips, focused on the migration and refugee crises, which was relevant to share; I was in Addis Ababa, meeting the African Union just at the beginning of the week. So first of all we exchanged notes and coordinated messages in view of the meetings today on the Middle East Peace Process and on Syria. We had a press conference earlier today so I will not repeat what we already said.

My next meeting was with Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu. The last time we met was in New York, just a few weeks ago, and since then we have had several telephone conversations as the situation was escalating on the ground, in Jerusalem and

elsewhere. I passed him a message of the need to explore together ways to stop violence, to calm down the situation, to show leadership and restraint, also on the rhetoric, and make sure that there are not additional people losing their lives. Too many people have lost their lives already in this new wave of violence on both sides, both Israelis and Palestinians. I have stressed the need to do that, not only for the sake of the people in the region, on the ground, but also given the regional and global responsibility that the two leaderships have as the conflict concentrates on the holy sites. This risks inflaming the situation regionally and even potentially globally - whenever a conflict overlaps with the regional dimension, with an identity dimension, that turns very easily into something very dangerous for the international community as such. This means that showing leadership and acting with a certain degree of restraint is not only a responsibility the two leaderships have to their own people, but also to the regional and the international communities.

We discussed concrete ways to deescalate the situation on the ground and to guarantee the status quo in the holy sites. I had from him the clear commitment reaffirming that he wants to guarantee the status quo in the holy sites and this is something I am going to discuss in detail with the Jordanian Foreign Minister tomorrow in Vienna. As you know Jordan has a key role to play in guaranteeing the status quo of the holy sites. We also discussed concrete steps to implement on the ground - consistent with prior agreements - that could move the situation on the ground, especially in Gaza and West Bank, in Jerusalem, both on the economic and on the security level. These are things we have discussed already in New York the last Quartet meeting we had, in the margins of General Assembly. These are things we have discussed with PM Netanyahu and with President Abbas, I discussed personally with them, in New York, it's only two weeks ago, but it seems decades ago in terms of situation on the ground. We remain convinced - and this is the message I passed to him - that while we find ways or we look for ways to deescalate violence on the ground we have to start implementing measures on the ground, consistent with prior agreements, to have improvements for the population, both the Israeli and the Palestinian.

This could be part of a political process that needs to be re-started. At the same time as we look for concrete ways to de-escalate, we have to give perspectives on the political process. It is not phase one and phase two, the two have to go together even more now than before. Without a political horizon, the situation is not going to calm down. This is something we will further discuss tomorrow in Vienna, where

we will have a Quartet Principals' meeting, as a follow-up to the New York one. So, with me, Secretary Kerry, Minister Lavrov and the Secretary General of the United Nations will join us most likely through video conference, or his Special Envoy will represent him.

Let me add that I will have a similar meeting with President Abbas on Monday evening in Brussels and obviously I will raise with him the same kind of issues. And I believe the meeting of the Quartet tomorrow will be a very important moment for us to indicate the unity of the international community to work together with the parties to find concrete ways to de-escalate and contain the situation and at the same time re-launch the process.

Finally, last but not least, I had a meeting with John Kerry, US Secretary of State, to somehow compare notes of our respective meetings. On one side, on the Middle East Peace Process, preparing also the Quartet of tomorrow, and coordinating actions we can have on the ground. And also on Syria, in preparation of the meeting he will have tomorrow in Vienna with Russia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. I exchanged with him the main results, or findings or thoughts after the work I have done in the last weeks on the Syrian crisis, mainly with our counterparts in Iran, also in Turkey and in the Gulf. I will have tomorrow a meeting with Foreign Minister Lavrov also discussing this, both Middle East and Syria.

But with John Kerry we also discussed the situation in Libya. That is something that concerns us Europeans very much and also our American friends. I called today the Prime Minister Designate for an exchange of views on the situation in this moment. Strong push for the HOR and the GNC to endorse the agreement, and I guaranteed to the Prime Minister Designate the European Union's support in his difficult work. He will have the Europeans at his side, in all the ways in which the future Libyan Government will decide it is needed. So, in full partnership, in full coordination, but they have to know from now that we are ready to help, to support, to accompany on an agenda that they will have to define. Obviously, the situation is not there yet, we don't have the agreement yet, but the Prime Minister Designate has already a responsibility to reach out to the Libyans, to the parties, to start planning and building the possible future of the country while talks go on. We are fully engaged through our people on the ground in Tunis, working side by side with Bernardino León and with the others of the international community to push for an agreement to be finalised and the Government of National Accord to start work. So, I had a very good first exchange with the Prime Minister Designate on

the way forward, and I am looking forward to be able to meet him as soon as possible.

Watch the video:

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I110919>