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ASIA/SYRIA - The Holy See to the UN: there can be no military solution in Syria, it is necessary to start negotiations

New York City (Agenzia Fides) – No more wasting time, exclude any military option, immediately start a negotiation: it is what Mgr. Francis A. Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN, asked yesterday during the open debate of the Security Council on the Middle East. The Apostolic Nuncio criticized the "persistent refusal" of Syria's warring factions to negotiate an end to the country's 28-month-long civil war, calling on the international community to act quickly to stop the conflict.
"There can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict", he remarked in his speech, sent to FideAgency. "Regardless of this – the Nuncio clearly condemned - parties to the conflict manifest determination, with total impunity, to shed yet more blood, to supply even more weapons and to destroy more lives", before they can be brought to the negotiating table.
Archbishop Chullikatt blamed "outside influences and extremist groups" for continuing the devastating war. Their involvement is seen seen as "an opportunity for political or ideological gains, rather than as an appalling disaster that is engulfing Syria". " War - he said – can never more be considered a means of resolving conflicts. Yet war, when it occurs, can only be won through peace, and peace won through negotiations, dialogue and reconciliation".
The Archbishop expressed concern about the mounting death toll from the war, numbering nearly 100 thousand since hostilities began and pointed to "the plight of Syrian refugees", in the country and in other neighboring countries: about 6.8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.
He also addressed the Vatican's concern for Syria's Christians, who he said "have faced challenges to their survival", Archbishop Chullikatt cited the murder of Fr. Father Francois Murad, the kidnappings of other Christians, including bishops and priests, and the destruction of more than 60 churches and affiliated institutions.
The Archbishop concluded by inviting everyone to "desist from hindering the long overdue negotiated settlement to this conflict". "Peace in Syria makes us all winners", he recalled.
An international petition and an appeal to Pope Francis for a "new diplomatic initiative" were launched in recent days also by Fr. Paolo dall'Oglio, a Jesuit who had been in Syria for over thirty years, expelled from the country in June 2012. "Knowing that you are a lover of peace and justice - is what dall'Oglio writes to the Pope - we ask you to personally promote a diplomatic initiative, urgent and inclusive for Syria, which ensures the end of the regime, safeguards unity in the diversity of the country and allows, by means of democratic self-determination assisted internationally, the end of the war between armed extremism". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 25/07/2013)

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