



Earthquake in Abruzzo: National Emergency in Italy

(April 06, 2009)



Many Italians, Italian-Americans and Americans expressed their solidarity towards the victims of the earthquake. Among them Nancy Pelosi, Barack Obama and our Consul General in New York, Francesco Maria Talò

“You all know that this is a very sad day for our country. The whole national community is mobilized for the terrible calamity that killed so many of our fellow citizens in the region of Abruzzo.” The Consul General Francesco Maria Talò used these words today in opening the first conference of the project "Obiettivo Futuro", where the young representatives of NOVA (Italian MBA Association) were meeting Mr. Massimo Capuano, President and CEO of Borsa Italiana Spa. The Consul saluted the attending guests expressing his deep sorrow for the over 150 people that lost their lives last night, when a violent earthquake hit central Italy.



"It is a moment of commitment and solidarity towards the victims of the earthquake and we all appreciate the offers of help and assistance that we are constantly receiving from foreign governments and friends, starting with the US President Barack Obama, who expressed his deepest sorrow for our victims at a press conference in Ankara, where he is now in official visit. We are also grateful to all the individuals and associations of every kind that are showing great closeness to our people.

Our Civil Protection Department announced today that there is no need at the moment for emergency assistance from abroad: rescuers started working from the very first minute, reaching the hit zones almost in real time. We all know that our civil defense system is considered to be one of the most modern and efficient worldwide. We had the opportunity to discuss this with the head of the Department Guido Bertolaso, during the conference we held last December in New York to celebrate the Centenary of the Messina earthquake.

The region of Abruzzo is mountainous and disseminated with small and very antique towns. However, we are confident that our Civil Protection will do the best possible to help the survivors of this terrible tragedy".

The Italian-American House Speaker Nancy Pelosi also warmly expressed her solidarity in a statement regarding the earthquake:

"Today, I called President Berlusconi on behalf of my colleagues in the Congress to express our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of those who suffered death and destruction in the earthquake in the Abruzzo region of Italy. (...) President Berlusconi and the Italian government have our steadfast support as they search for survivors, comfort those affected, and move toward helping the people of Abruzzo rebuild their lives. (...) Having visited Italy as part of a U.S. delegation in the aftermath of the earthquake in Southern Italy in 1980, I have seen firsthand the courage of the Italian people in the face of a similar tragedy. I hope that it is some comfort that so many people throughout the world are thinking of them and praying for them at this difficult time."

A 6.3-magnitude earthquake jolted central Italy early Monday.

The earthquake struck at 3:32 a.m. (1:32 a.m. GMT Sunday) about 95 kilometers (60 miles) northeast of Rome and at a depth of 10 kilometers (6.2 miles). More than 26 towns and villages were hit in and around L'Aquila, the capital of the Abruzzo region.

At least 207 people died and more than 1,500 were injured. "It's the worst tragedy since the start of the millennium," said Civil Protection chief Guido Bertolaso.



At this moment 4,000 rescuers are at work and are extracting people from the rubble.

A camp with 2,000 tents, each capable of housing 8-10 people, is currently being set up and will host those who lost their homes in the disaster. Survivors have also been reserved around 4,000 beds in hotels in the area.

The European Union, the United States, Russia, Germany, France, Greece, Israel, Poland and Afghanistan were among countries who immediately contacted the Italian government: while the United States President Barack Obama sent his condolences to the families hit by the quake as he arrived for an official visit in Turkey, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said he was "deeply shocked" by the news of the quake and offered to send aid.



Within minutes after the quake, witness and solidarity groups were mushrooming up on the Internet.

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