

Beat: News

ITALY-PRIME MINISTER RENZI SEES RUSSIA PLAYING KEY ROLE IN LIBYA

UKRAINE IN NEED OF DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION

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USPA NEWS - Premier Matteo Renzi said Thursday that Russia can play a key role in solving the crisis in Libya after meeting President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin.

"Russia's role can be decisive, given its history and its role in the Security Council," Renzi told a news conference. "An incisive international response is needed". Libya has been in chaos since the end of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011 and there is alarm about the spread of jihadists linked to the Islamic State (ISIS) fundamentalist insurgency in the north African country. Libya's northern coast is only hundreds of kilometres from Italy's southern-most islands and ISIS jihadists warned that they were now "south of Rome" in a video showing the execution of a number of Egyptian Coptic Christians last month.

Furthermore, the chaos and a breakdown in security has allowed human smugglers to flourish in Libya and send thousands of migrants to Italy.

The international community's priority must be the fight against "terrorism, fanaticism and those who want to destroy the values that our communities are founded on," Renzi said Thursday.

Russia backs the UN on Libya, where "the situation has got worse," Putin said after talks with the Italian premier.

Renzi also said Thursday in the Russian capital that "there is no alternative to a political and diplomatic solution" on the Ukraine crisis at the start of talks with Premier Dmitri Medvedev. Renzi arrived Wednesday from Kiev, where he met with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko.

In an interview with TASS Russian news agency after his meeting with Medvedev, Renzi said the Minsk treaty between Russia and Ukraine "was a step forward". "We must all respect...the Minsk agreement," Renzi said.

"We must work on a daily basis for the premises and promises of Minsk to become a reality". The Minsk protocol between Russia and Ukraine was brokered by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande in Moscow in January. It calls for a ceasefire and Constitutional reforms to ensure the rights of people in eastern Ukraine are respected.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA

(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com