
Migrants at the Greece-Turkey border: mgr. Rossolatos (Athens), “pushed by the Turks and rejected by the Greeks”

Riots at the border between Greece and Turkey, where dozens of thousands of refugees and immigrants are trying to enter Europe, rejected by the Greek Police and Army. As pressure escalates, Greece is sending reinforcements. Last Friday, the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, announced that he would let migrants pass through as they headed for the EU countries, after the escalation of the armed conflict in Idlib, Syria, where troops of the crescent flag country are also fighting on the side of the Islamist militias, who oppose to Assad's regime. A choice, that of Erdogan, driven by the request made to the EU to comply with the agreements signed in 2016, when the member states promised to give 6 billion euros' aids to Ankara to fund their homing of Syrians and others, fleeing from hunger and war. “The pressure of this mass of poor people is huge”, comments mgr. Sevastianos Rossolatos, archbishop of Athens and president of the Greek Bishops' Conference, who tried to describe the state of things to SIR. “The refugees – he states – are fighting on one side with the Greek forces that are trying to prevent them from entering our country and on the other side with the Turkish forces that are instead pushing them, even under duress, to get in, after driving them for free by bus and taxi to close to our borders. They are living in desperate conditions, they sleep in the open air and have no help”. “They are – the archbishop of Athens adds – refugees that came to Turkey a long time ago, largely homed in and around Istanbul. We learnt from the media that they also include some convicts that have been freed by the Turks. They are not refugees from Idlib where fights are taking place right now”. “To help them get into Greece – mgr. Rossolatos explains – the Turkish troops are said to be cutting the barbed wire at the border. The Turkish plan is to push the refugees closer to Greece to put pressure on the EU. A EU summit is expected to take place next Thursday to deal with such problem”. Recent news said instead that tomorrow the presidents of the EU Commission, the European Parliament and the EU Council, Ursula von der Leyen, David Sassoli and Charles Michel, respectively, will be at the land border between Greece and Turkey with the Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis. This was announced by Mitsotakis himself on Twitter, adding the comment: “An important show of support from the three institutions, at a time Greece is successfully defending the EU borders”.

Daniele Rocchi