



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - Geneva

5923

### NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and, following the Letter AL ITA 6/2024 dated 6 December 2024 by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change; the Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association has the honour to transmit herewith Italy's reply.

This Permanent Mission would be grateful for kindly confirming receipt of this Note Verbale and of the attached document.

The Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurance of its highest consideration.

Geneva,

19 AOUT 2025



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Office of the United Nations  
High Commissioner for Human Rights  
GENEVA



Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
e della Cooperazione Internazionale

**COMITATO INTERMINISTERIALE PER I DIRITTI UMANI**

***Italy's reply to the Joint Communication AL ITA 6/2024***

***March 2025***

### ***Italy's reply to the Joint Communication AL ITA 6/2024***

Further to UN Joint Communication AL ITA 6/2024 by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change, the Special Rapporteur on the human right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment, the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, we are in a position to provide the following information.

On 9, 10 and 11 July 2024, the G7 Ministerial meeting, led by Italy, devoted to the theme of Science and Technology, took place at the *Tecnopolo* in Bologna, located in *Via Stalingrado*. Throughout the event, in order to ensure the smooth running of the various appointments, the local Police HQs. set up an adequate joint forces-related mechanism, composed of State Police, Carabinieri Corps and Revenue Guards Corps, deployed to the area surrounding the venue of the event, besides surveillance devices at various sensitive points of the city. In this context, at around 5 pm, on 9 July, in *Piazza Maggiore*, a group of activists, linked to the environmental movement "Extinction Rebellion", carried out an impromptu protest before and on the roofs of *Palazzo d'Accursio*, being the headquarters of the municipal administration. Some demonstrators stood in front of the entrance to the aforementioned Palace, where they sat on the ground chained with some padlocks. This behavior prevented the many visitors from entering the public spaces, while other activists descended from the terrace of the Palace unrolling a banner on the facade, as a sign of protest against the ongoing summit.

Immediately, the personnel intervened on site, primarily to clear access to the municipal administration, then to put an end to the unlawful conduct both of the demonstrators who were seated in front of the gate at the ground floor, and of those who arrived on the panoramic terrace of the Clock Tower. All were lifted and accompanied to the local Police HQs.

The operations, led by the above personnel concerning 21 "Extinction Rebellion" activists (of whom 10 were women) was characterized - from the very beginning - by a high degree of difficulty. Firstly because of the activists' refusal to move (beforehand they were bound to each other by means of specific devices), secondly, because of the danger posed by those hanging on the facade of the building, for whom it was necessary the intervention of a squad of firefighters, in order to ensure the utmost safety.

At the end of the proceedings, the 21 individuals subjected to identification and photo-signaling procedures were “reported in a state of freedom” (*denunciati in stato di libertà*), for joint conducts, consisting of unannounced demonstration, private violence, interruption of public service, invasion of land or buildings and attempted aggravated damage to a building with historical relevance.

As regards the presence of the persons accompanied to the local Police HQs., it is to be stressed that they were held for the time required by law to carry out the judicial police work related to the conducts for which they were responsible, in full compliance with rules and procedures. The Judicial Authorities were immediately notified of all the activities carried out.

As per practice, the operating personnel proceeded to carry out searches of the demonstrators accompanied to the local Police HQs., in order to find either objects relevant to the crimes or material, even small, which could be used to perform harmful acts or self-harm acts.

Ms. V.C. was searched by female staff in suitable premises and in a manner that did not harm, at all, her dignity.

At this stage, the Public Prosecutor at the Bologna Tribunal points out that Ms. V.C. was not put under arrest but that she was “reported in a state of freedom” (*denunciata in stato di libertà*) for the offence under Article 18 of *R.D.773/TULPS* and other provisions; therefore she was summoned to the premises of the Bologna Police Headquarters, for identification and personal search procedures.

It should be highlighted that Ms. V.C. is the offended party (*persona offesa*) in other proceedings for the offence in Article 609 of the Criminal Code following her complaint filed for the facts occurred during the G7 meeting. In this regard, the Public Prosecutor at the Bologna Tribunal sent a copy of the request for dismissal and he also points out that this request has been already notified to Ms. V.C., as the offended party (*persona offesa*).

To be noted that the above-mentioned request for dismissal contains an analytical reconstruction of the facts, both as regards Police controls, to which Ms. V.C. was submitted, and the charges made against some participants in the event, occurred on 9 July 2024, as sponsored by members of the "Extinction Rebellion" group. Finally, it is to be emphasized that the request for dismissal also contains elements valid to justify the intervention of the State Police, taking into account that in that context, the access to the venue of the municipal administration of Bologna was prevented.

With regard to the protection of environmental activists, at its third extraordinary session (Geneva, 23-24 June 2022), the Conference of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, to which Italy is a party, elected a Special Rapporteur on Defenders of the Environment by consensus (Mr. Michel Forst). No report concerning Italy has been sent to date.

Italy recognizes the paramount importance of civil society, whose contribution to building democratic and pluralistic societies, stability and prosperity is irreplaceable.

Human rights defenders play a pivotal role in promoting and protecting human rights at the local, national, regional and international levels by raising awareness on human rights issues and promoting higher standards of protection. In this context, journalists, including independent journalists, bloggers and citizen journalists, are an essential component of a free and open society and a key instrument to keep an accountable system of government.

In this framework, as a way of example, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation:

- Strongly supports women human rights defenders and the prominent role they play in addressing gender inequality.
- Supports the activities of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.
- Promotes an ongoing open dialogue with civil society organizations active in the promotion and protection of human rights.
- Supports initiatives aimed at raising awareness on the need to devote greater attention to the protection of journalists, both online and offline, according to Italy's membership in the Media Freedom Coalition.

### **CONCLUSION**

Italy takes this to reiterate its commitment to continue cooperating with UN Special Procedures.