

Inter Her tril

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Italy Sees Movement on Albania Force

Reuters

ROME — The government said Tuesday it expected a decision “within days” on the size and objectives of a foreign protection force that would be sent to Albania to guard a European Union relief mission.

But Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, speaking after EU foreign ministers met with Prime Minister Bashkim Fino of Albania in Rome, insisted that Italy would not intervene on its own in the Balkan state.

“We are preparing with other countries a multilateral security force to give security protection to civilians we are sending with the European Union to Albania,” Mr. Dini said at a news conference.

Foreign Minister Abel Matutes of Spain said Madrid was ready in principle to join such a force. Turkey, which is not an EU member, also has expressed a willingness to join. Mr. Dini said Austria and Romania, another non-EU state, also were prepared to take part.

On Monday, EU foreign ministers meeting in Brussels shied away from supporting military intervention in Albania, where much of the southern part of the country is beyond the government’s control. But the foreign ministers welcomed efforts by some EU states to assemble a force “under the appropriate international aegis” to provide security for deliveries of food and medical supplies and assistance.

Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo of the Netherlands, which holds the rotating EU presidency, said an advisory team — the second in two weeks — would leave for Albania on Wednesday to assess the scale of a potential relief mission.

■ Journalist Is Shot in Albania

A Dutch journalist was shot and critically wounded in the southern Albanian town of Sarande, officials at a Greek hospital in Corfu said, according to an Agence France-Presse report.

She was identified as Vilma Gundabel, 39, who worked for the British television network ITN. One hospital official said she probably had been hit in the chest by a bullet fired from a long distance.