

# Italy moves up tanks and helicopters

By Haig Simonian in Milan

THE ITALIAN government yesterday took its first steps to protect its border with Yugoslavia following the upsurge in fighting in Slovenia by moving tanks and helicopters into the north-east of the country. Other units in the region have been put on a heightened state of alert.

Border posts near the cities of Trieste and Gorizia in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region have been reinforced following growing concern among inhabitants about fighting between

federal troops and Slovene militiamen on the Yugoslav side of the border.

Meanwhile, inhabitants of Gorizia, which straddles the border alongside its Slovene sister-town of Nova Gorica, have been particularly anxious owing to their proximity to the frontier, where a number of shooting incidents have already taken place.

The Italian authorities are also taking preliminary measures to deal with potential floods of refugees from Slo-

venia as a result of this week's upsurge in violence. Yesterday afternoon, a small group of Yugoslav federal troops laid down their weapons and crossed to the Italian side of the border to surrender. However, with most border points still closed, the number of refugees appears to have been little more than a trickle so far.

The same cannot be said for tourists, who are still pouring out of holiday destinations along the Yugoslavian coast. At Trieste's small Ronchi dei

Legionari airport, some 2,600 British holidaymakers were waiting yesterday for special UK and Yugoslav charter flights to take them home.

The rise in tension has prompted calls from regional leaders in both Italy and Austria for their governments to recognise the self-proclaimed state of Slovenia. At a meeting of the "Alpe-Adria" group of 17 regions in Klagenfurt yesterday, delegates called for recognition of both Slovene and Croatian independence.