Cyprus under shield: Italy sets sail with allies against the Iranian threat

Published on 05/03/2026

ROME, March 5, 2026 — Italy is preparing to send **naval units** to the **eastern Mediterranean** to help protect **Cyprus** following recent attacks attributed to **Iran**. The announcement came from Defense Minister **Guido Crosetto**, who spoke of a joint initiative with **Spain**, **France**, and **Netherlands** "in the coming days."

The mission: protect Cyprus and the southeastern European flank

The decision stems from fears that the war with **Iran** could expand to the southeastern "edge" of **Europe**, with Cyprus at the forefront. This week, the British base **RAF Akrotiri** (in the south of the island) was identified as a target for **attack drones**, reigniting concerns about the vulnerability of strategic infrastructures in the area.

Cyprus is also a key point for logistics and security in the Levant: here converge the interests of **NATO**, European partners, and regional allies. Not surprisingly, **Athens** has already reacted by sending **two Greek frigates** to support the island.

Among the units that could move quickly is the frigate Spartaco Schergat (class **FREMM**), which is off the coast of **Sicily** and is concluding the **NATO Dynamic Manta** exercise. The operational limit is logistical: before heading to **Cyprus**, the ship should return to **base** for **refueling**.

According to internal assessments, a more robust option for **air defense** would be a **Horizon** class destroyer, thanks to its **long-range** radars. But here availability comes into play: the **Andrea Doria** is far away (off the coast of **Norway**), while the **Caio Duilio** is under **maintenance** in **La Spezia**. Translated: the Italian choice will depend on the compromise between **speed** of deployment and **surveillance** and engagement **capability**.

On the operational level, the involved navies could coordinate without a single national command: **multinational** cooperation with **separate** command chains, but a common goal.

Cyprus under shield: Italy sets sail with allies against the Iranian threat

The European response: French aircraft carrier, Spanish frigate, UK moves, and German caution

The European push is led by France: President **Emmanuel Macron** has ordered the **Charles de Gaulle** aircraft carrier group (initially in exercise in northern Europe) to head towards the **Mediterranean**. The arrival is expected between the end of the week and the beginning of the next, according to French Minister **Catherine Vautrin**.

Spain has already joined the formation: the frigate **Cristóbal Colón** has been identified as a key asset for **protection** and **air defense**, in synergy with a Spanish **Patriot** battery deployed in **Turkey**. Madrid also foresees a possible role for **civilian evacuations** if the crisis worsens.

The **United Kingdom**, on the other hand, is relying on the Type 45 **Dragon** to strengthen the security of the base in Cyprus, but the ship is still in preparation and could set sail only **next week**. The **Netherlands** is sending the frigate **Evertsen**, with the mission still to be defined. **Germany** remains more cautious: Berlin speaks of support for “preventive measures,” but maintains that regional and **NATO** plans already ensure an adequate level of readiness.

Meanwhile, Italy is also looking beyond Cyprus: Prime Minister **Giorgia Meloni** has said that Rome will send **air defense** systems to protect the **Gulf States**, and in Italian circles, the hypothesis of deploying the **SAMP/T** is growing.

News link: https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2026/03/05/italy-allies-send-warships-to-protect-europes-southeastern-edge-from-iran-strikes/