



General Iannucci between Kuwait, Iraq, and Kurdistan

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A clear and direct message, brought by General of the Army Corps Giovanni Maria Iannucci, former Commander of the Paratroopers Brigade Folgore and now Commander of the COVI (Joint Operational Command), to the Italian military engaged between Kuwait and Iraq: "*What you do is important*". On the occasion of the Easter holidays, the Commander wanted to be present alongside his men and women in uniform, recognizing the value of daily commitment in a strategic and unstable area.

The visit began on Easter Monday at the "Castra Praetoria" airbase in Ali al-Salem, Kuwait, where he was welcomed by Colonel Fabio Bergamini, Commander of Task Force Air Kuwait. After greeting the personnel and reviewing the operational situation, General Iannucci met with the Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, Lorenzo Morini. From there, the journey continued to Baghdad and Iraqi Kurdistan, symbolic and operational stops of a mission that reaffirms Italy's centrality in regional balances.

In Baghdad, the Commander visited the Diplomatic Support Center, where Special Forces, logistical units, and Carabinieri of the Mobile Training Team operate. In parallel, he attended a significant **joint air exercise between the Italian Air Force and the Iraqi Air Force, called “UR2”**. The operation involved Iraqi F-16s, Italian Eurofighters, NH90 helicopters, C-27J, C-130, and a Special Forces team. A clear example of interoperability and cooperation between the two armed forces, with the aim of strengthening local capabilities and contributing to the region's stability.

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Institutional dialogue and cooperation: high-level meetings

General Iannucci's presence in the Middle East was not limited to the operational field alone. Numerous high-profile institutional meetings took place, starting with the one with Ambassador Niccolò Fontana and the **Defense Attaché, Colonel Domenico Sermon**. On the sidelines of the “UR2” exercise, the COVI Commander held talks with the Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Defense, General Yarallah, with the leaders of the NATO Mission Iraq, the Inherent Resolve operation, and with the Iraqi National Security Advisor.

Further appointments followed the next day with local military authorities, including the Deputy Commander of the Joint Operation Command, General Al Muhammadawi, and the Commander of the Federal Police, Lieutenant General Salih Nasr Hussain Muhsin al-Amiri. These meetings were an opportunity to review ongoing operations, joint training, and the key role of Italian forces in supporting Iraqi security.

An institutional message was also conveyed on behalf of the Minister of Defense, Guido Crosetto, and the Chief of Defense Staff, General Luciano Portolano, transmitted by General Iannucci to the staff of the Italian Embassy in Baghdad and to the military engaged in NATO, Inherent Resolve, and EUAM Iraq missions.

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Erbil and Kurdistan: training looking to the future

The last leg of the journey brought the Italian delegation to Erbil, the operational heart of the Italian contingent of the “Prima Parthica” operation. Here, General Iannucci met with Consul General Tommaso Sansone and the contingent Commander, Colonel Antonello Andreottola. During the operational briefing, the importance of military assistance and training activities in favor of local forces, particularly the Zeravani forces and the Peshmerga, was reiterated.

A significant moment was **the visit to the Benaslawa Training Center, where Kurdish soldiers conducted a final exercise showcasing the skills acquired thanks to courses held by Italian military, from urban combat techniques to mortar firing**. General Iannucci was also received by the Kurdish Interior Minister Rebar Ahmed Khalid, with whom he discussed Italy's fundamental role in the internal security of the autonomous region.

Closing the mission, the COVI Commander received words of appreciation from Lieutenant General Issa Ozeir, Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, who emphasized the deep bond of friendship between the Kurdish people and Italy.

General Iannucci's visit confirmed the strategic and respected role of the Italian Armed Forces in the Middle East. A commitment that combines professionalism, dedication, and military diplomacy in the service of peace and international stability.

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