



Iraq, Crosetto announces: Withdrawal of our Armed Forces completed, a new phase begins

Published on 29/09/2026

ROME – With the return of the last personnel involved in recovering and relocating logistical equipment, the presence of the Italian Armed Forces in Iraq has officially come to an end. The announcement was made by Defense Minister Guido Crosetto, who stressed that activities connected with the International Coalition's *Inherent Resolve* (OIR) operation and the *NATO Mission Iraq* will continue to operate from other countries.

Mission reorganization and the September 30 deadline

In particular, *NATO Mission Iraq* will continue to operate from its temporary headquarters in Lago Patria, in the province of Naples, at NATO's *Joint Force Command Naples*. The withdrawal of Italian forces from Iraqi territory took place in accordance with the September 30 deadline agreed with the Baghdad authorities, in line with the other Coalition and NATO countries operating in the area.

As the minister noted, the end of the military presence on the ground does not stem from a unilateral Italian decision, but from the start of a different phase agreed with the Iraqi authorities and international partners, marked by the local security forces' full assumption of responsibility.

Twelve years of commitment against Daesh

This brings to a close a mission that lasted a total of twelve years. Over this period, thousands of Italian service members operated in Iraq, making a decisive contribution to the fight against Daesh, the country's security, and training activities for both the Iraqi Armed Forces and the security forces of Iraqi Kurdistan.

The return of the Italian contingent had already been largely completed by March 2026, while in recent weeks the presence on the ground had been reduced to only the technical teams essential for recovering and managing logistical equipment.

Toward renewed bilateral cooperation

The end of the military presence does not, however, interrupt diplomatic and partnership relations. As confirmed by recent talks between the Chief of Defence Staff, General Luciano Portolano, and his Iraqi counterpart, General Abdul Amir Yarallah, the shared objective of Italy and Iraq is to preserve and strengthen their bilateral ties.

The new cooperation model will focus on a reduced footprint on the ground and an increase in targeted activities, including training, exchanges of expertise and experience, and capability-development programs for the Iraqi Armed Forces.

As further evidence of the continuity of dialogue and cooperation, two Italian Carabinieri remain operational in Iraq as part of the European Union mission *EUAM Iraq*, which has been duly authorized by the Iraqi Government.

In concluding the statement, Minister Crosetto thanked the men and women of the Italian Armed Forces who have served in Iraq over the past twelve years, praising their professionalism, spirit of sacrifice, and sense of duty.

News link: <https://www.italpress.com/>