



Lebanon, the Paris summit on the post-UNIFIL: why isn't Italy there? What happened to the axis with France?

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The recent diplomatic-military meeting held in Paris at the Élysée – which saw French President Emmanuel Macron receive Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and King Abdullah II of Jordan, along with senior officials from the United States, Great Britain and Saudi Arabia to prepare the plan for deploying the Lebanese army in view of the post-UNIFIL period – raises inevitable (and at times disconcerting) questions about Italy's positioning.

Just a few months ago, in June 2026, the same Lebanese President Joseph Aoun publicly praised the «joint efforts of Paris and Rome» for the establishment of a multinational coalition intended to replace the UNIFIL mission (whose mandate expires at the end of the year, followed by an orderly withdrawal). At that very occasion, at the summit in Antibes, Emmanuel Macron and Giorgia Meloni had announced their common intention to create a force to strengthen

sovereignty in Lebanon.

In light of these premises, Italy's absence from the operational table today in Paris makes noise. Why did Rome remain excluded from such a crucial appointment for defining the future military arrangement and security of Lebanon?

Possible readings of a weighty absence

1. **A Franco-American axis and alignment on disarmament:** The Paris summit sees the strategic presence of Washington and London, as well as Saudi Arabia. The Élysée's stated objective is to draw up a clear and realistic plan for the deployment of Lebanese Armed Forces with a view to disarming Hezbollah and Israel's withdrawal. If France is tightening ranks with its Anglo-Saxon and regional allies on such a clear operational mandate, it is possible that Italy has chosen (or been forced to accept) a line of partial detachment from the more unscrupulous or accelerated methods imposed by other Western partners.
2. **The national path traced by Crosetto:** In recent months, the Italian position has moved on precise tracks. In light of the downsizing and the expiration of the UNIFIL mandate set by the UN Security Council for the end of 2026, Defence Minister Guido Crosetto has strongly reiterated that Italy intends to defend its presence and that, should the UN decide on withdrawal, the government is ready to propose to Parliament an expansion of the autonomous bilateral mission (MIBIL), stressing that "one does not abandon a people" and that a nation must know how to "take on responsibilities even individually". Could this willingness to act autonomously or to decisively focus on strengthening bilateral cooperation have modified Paris's approach?
3. **A phase of diplomatic transition:** It is not ruled out that Italy's absence from this specific tripartite summit (France, Lebanon, Jordan) widens the cracks in coordination that, after the Antibes announcements, is undergoing variations in pace and diplomatic priorities. While France accelerates the construction of a global operational coalition under Washington's aegis and with Arab partners, Italy seems to be focusing on safeguarding its own historical footprint on the ground and strengthening the training channels already existing with Lebanese security forces.

What scenarios now?

The risk for Italian diplomacy is to passively suffer crucial decisions about Lebanon's future and the Middle Eastern situation, despite decades of front-line presence with UNIFIL peacekeepers and support for MIBIL. If Rome's intention was not to abdicate its strategic role, exclusion from the Paris summit imposes an urgent reflection: could the axis with France on the post-UNIFIL period transform into a Paris-Anglo-American monopoly? The answer will define Italy's political weight in Lebanon in the coming months.

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