Security Decree, Half Shield: Why the Army Remains the Cinderella

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The new security decree-law approved by the Council of Ministers on **February 5, 2026** was born with the declared ambition of strengthening public order and providing more protection to those operating on the front lines. In its intentions, it intervenes on multiple fronts: management of demonstrations, combating violence, stricter tools and rules, and a system of guarantees aimed at reducing the exposure of those called to use force for service reasons.

But in the actual provision—and especially in its concrete application—a fracture emerges that weighs like a stone: **the Armed Forces, employed for years in security activities on the territory, continue not to enjoy fully homogeneous protections compared to the police forces**, despite performing similar tasks "in cooperation," often in the same contexts, on the same targets, and with comparable risks.

And here lies the heart of the criticism: if the State asks the military to do "street" security, then it must guarantee a coherent protection framework. Because it is not acceptable to have a

system where operational responsibility is high, exposure is daily, and the risk—even just of getting caught up in proceedings, legal costs, suspensions, reputational damage—remains on the shoulders of the individual.

For this reason, it becomes no longer postponable **to extend the legal protections provided for the police forces also to the personnel of the Army, the Navy, and the Coast Guard employed in similar security and police activities**: similar responsibilities must correspond to **equivalent protections**, without creating “A series” and “B series” operators within the same security system.

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Safe Streets: Same Risks, Fewer Tools, More Paradoxes

The contradiction is even more evident in the daily employment of the Army in operations like **Safe Streets** and **Safe Stations**, where soldiers are called to guard sensitive targets, stations, infrastructures, crowded places. A service that, in public perception, equates to “doing police work,” but for the military often remains a task of **static presence**, designed more for deterrence than for complete intervention management.

And while the employment absorbs energy, time, rotations, logistics, and training, the operational framework remains unbalanced: **the soldier is deployed, visible, called to react if something happens, but with a range of passive coercion tools and “intermediate” management reduced or uncertain**.

The point is not to ask for “privileges”: it is to demand consistency. Today, for many soldiers employed in surveillance services, **tools that in other corps are considered part of the standard equipment are lacking**. No Tasers, no handcuffs as standard operational equipment in that context; at most, there is talk of hypotheses like **pepper spray**, often in forms and procedures yet to be clarified, with the further paradox of a tool that, in common perception, is “for civilian self-defense” rather than for structured service.

Result: **the soldier is asked to prevent and contain, but is left without a complete range of options**. And this is not just a practical issue: it is a risk factor, because when intermediate tools do not exist or are confused, the real alternatives become few, drastic, and potentially explosive on the legal and media level.

Meanwhile, it is not uncommon for units to be employed on targets perceived as of **dubious priority**, decided elsewhere and in a framework where the Ministry of the Interior, by necessity, tends to consider the military as “operational reinforcement.” **The problem is not serving the State: the problem is being used as second-tier labor**, while being trained for a different mission, with training, preparation, and an ethos that cannot be wasted in a routine of guarding without perspective.

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The Way Out: Equal Protections, Coherent Missions, Army Freed from Improper Tasks

If order is truly to be restored, the solution is not cosmetic and does not lie in institutional greetings or circumstantial videos. A change of approach is needed, made of clear decisions.

First: legal, professional, and economic protections must be **homogeneous** for all those who operate in internal security with similar responsibilities. It is not sustainable for those who wear the uniform and guard the same sensitive points to have different protections only for "administrative label" or for traditional ordering. **The extension of protections to the Armed Forces employed in security is not a favor: it is a principle of operational equity.**

Second: the gap on tools must be filled. If military personnel are employed in urban and public order contexts "in fact," then it must be clearly defined which passive coercion tools are allowed, with simple rules, training, procedures, and precise responsibilities. Personnel cannot be left in limbo: too exposed not to intervene, too uncovered to intervene well.

Third: the announced prospect of **12,000 auxiliary Carabinieri** can finally become the right opportunity—not to create internal competition, but to put each component back in its natural place. If the goal is to strengthen security on the territory with personnel equipped with full police powers, then good: **truly free the Army** from "night watchman" tasks in which it is underutilized compared to its value. **The Army is needed for readiness, training, operational capabilities, strategic deterrence.** Not to be the permanent patch for alleged shortcomings of others.

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Finally, there is a political fact that cannot be ignored: the internal discussion within the majority on the downsizing of Safe Streets has shown how fragile the chain of command is when the issue becomes a flag. The “battle” lost by Minister Crosetto on cutting numbers is a signal: **as long as Safe Streets remains a propaganda ground, the military will remain in the middle, exposed and instrumentalized**.

The State must choose: either the military are a full part of the security system – with coherent protections and tools – **or have the courage to redesign the employment and return to the Armed Forces** what they exist for: defense, readiness, and operational credibility. Everything else is words. And words, when you are on duty in front of a station, do not protect you.

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