



Embassy of Italy
Baghdad

*Ambassadors, Defense Attaches, Iraqi Civilian and Military Authorities, Representatives of the NATO Mission Iraq and of the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve; **militari delle Forze Armate italiani**,*

Welcome to the Embassy of Italy and thank you to celebrate with us Italy's National Unity and Armed Forces Day.

November 4th marks the end of World War I. While celebrating that victory, we gather here today to honor the valor of those that have contributed to the unification of Italy and particularly of our Armed Forces, whose role and sacrifice in completing the Italian Risorgimento was crucial.

On the battlefield of the Great War, over ten million soldiers died in the darkness of the trenches. The conflict also resulted in the tragic loss of countless civilians. **It is alarming to observe striking parallels with the present.**

As we reflect upon the past, we must acknowledge the enduring brutality of each conflict. The ongoing wars in different parts of the world are reminders that the viciousness of conflict is not confined to the annals of history but remains a pervasive reality. **Peace, freedom and democracy are not a given,** they require our collective effort to defend them with our work, every day.

Italian Armed Forces embody those values, proudly serving both within national borders and abroad. Whether through peacekeeping missions, humanitarian assistance or working side by side with partners around the globe, **Italian Armed Forces remain resolute in the pursuit of stability and security.**

Here in Iraq, Italy stood by the Iraqi Authorities in the fight against terrorism since the very beginning. 8 years after Daesh's territorial defeat in this Country, we remain one of the main contributors to the Global Coalition, while being, at the same time, an integral part of NMI and of the EUAM.

Under those missions, our Armed Forces have played and still play a fundamental role in enhancing the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces, supporting the Iraqi Security Sector Reform. This is possible thanks to the **readiness, dedication and professionalism of our military personnel**, as well as their capacity to interact with great empathy in different contexts.

As we reflect on Italy's ongoing engagement in Iraq, let us also take a moment to remember with deep sorrow the tragic events of Nassiriya, whose anniversary falls on November 12th. The 2003 terrorist attack claimed the lives of 19 Italians and 9 Iraqis.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A century ago, Italy faced the hard task of rebuilding a Nation torn apart by conflict. The challenges that Iraq has been facing in recent years – rebuilding trust, promoting dialogue, reconstructing the economy and fostering social cohesion – are not unfamiliar to us. Yet, the Italian experience demonstrates that even in the face of adversity, **it is possible to forge a common path towards peace and progress.**

By embracing dialogue, fostering understanding and working together towards shared goals, Iraq can continue to overcome its challenges and build a brighter future for its people.

Finally yet importantly, a message to my compatriots in arms gathered here today – rappresentanti dell'Esercito, della Marina, dell'Aeronautica e dei Carabinieri,

Commemorating the Italian National Unity means living every day the enduring values that this achievement embodies: cohesion, solidarity, harmony within diversity. You have always been the epitome of a Nation that managed to set aside regional prejudices, social disparities and linguistic barriers to build a shared and prosperous future.

Today we honor the spirit and the sacrifice of your ancestors. And, we thank you for your commitment and your determination in following their footsteps in serving our beloved country.

Viva le Forze Armate, Viva la Repubblica Italiana.

Thank you.