



The Chief of SME in Tunisia: Strengthening Cooperation for a More Integrated and Strategic Defense

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The **strengthening of military cooperation between Italy and Tunisia** continues to be a strategic priority for both nations, aimed at ensuring an increasingly integrated defense capable of addressing security challenges in the Mediterranean. The Chief of Staff of the Army (SME), General of the Army Corps Carmine Masiello, recently concluded an official visit to Tunisia, during which progress was confirmed and intentions to develop new synergies between the armed forces of the two countries were expressed.

A Strategic Alliance in the Mediterranean

General Masiello's visit began at the Tunisian Army General Staff, where he met with the Chief of Staff of the Tunisian Army, General Mohamed Ghoul. During the meeting, the focal points of bilateral cooperation were highlighted, including the joint development of operational capabilities, the strengthening of training, and the exchange of experiences between specialized

units. A particularly relevant area concerns cooperation in the field of **Small Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS) and the K9 component**, essential for monitoring and managing threats in the Mediterranean context.

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The cooperation between the two armies is based on values of friendship, mutual respect, and trust, and is aimed at the stability and security of both nations. In this perspective, the Chief of SME stated that the primary goal is to build a better future for the countries and shared prosperity for the peoples through joint training, exercises, and the adoption of operational best practices.

One of the most significant developments of the visit was the identification of the Ben Ghilouf range as a priority area for future bilateral training activities. The technical agreement signed during the visit will ensure the legal protection of personnel employed during training activities, providing a solid foundation for ongoing cooperation. The area will indeed be used for specialized courses and real simulations involving personnel from both countries.

Geopolitical Dialogue and Shared Strategic Vision

General Masiello's visit also included diplomatic meetings with the Italian Ambassador to Tunis, H.E. Alessandro Prunas, and the Tunisian Minister of Defense, Mr. Khaled Sehili. During these talks, current geopolitical issues in the Mediterranean and the growing importance of multilateral dialogue were examined. In particular, the General reiterated Italy's commitment to strengthening regional cooperation activities through platforms such as the Italy-Tunisia Joint Military Commission, the 5+5 Defense initiative, the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, and the Barcelona Process.

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Another central element of the visit was the strengthening of the training of Tunisian personnel. In this regard, Italy reiterated its willingness to send Mobile Training Teams (MTT) to offer

specialized field courses. Cooperation will also extend to the formalization of technical-operational agreements regulating the presence of Italian instructors in Tunisia. This will further consolidate the partnership and create a shared strategic vision for future regional challenges.

A Tangible Sign of Commitment

The visit of the Chief of SME in Tunisia concluded with an inspection in Bizerte, where General Masiello met with personnel from the Special Forces and the 61st Engineer Regiment of the Tunisian Army. This meeting further strengthened operational cooperation on the ground, a tangible symbol of Italy's commitment to strengthening ties with Mediterranean partners and contributing to the stability and security of the region.

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The strengthening of cooperation between Italy and Tunisia represents an effective response to the ever-evolving challenges in the Mediterranean. With the development of joint capabilities, the strengthening of training, and the reinforcement of operational ties, both nations are ready to play a crucial role in promoting regional stability and protecting shared values of security and prosperity.