



Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito
III Reparto Pianificazione Generale

ITA ARMY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Italian Army (ITA Army) response to COVID-19 falls within the **Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA)**¹ and the ongoing homeland security operation "Strade Sicure"². The support is being coordinated by the Land Component Command HQ, with the support of the Army Logistic Command and under the supervision of the Joint Operational Command, which is responsible for the planning and execution of civil contingency operations within the Italian peninsula and its territorial waters during any military aid to Italian civilian authorities.

In addition, ITA Army is generating options to increase significantly its potential contribution in line with the expected peak of the infection rate.

More than 8100 soldiers³ are currently employed in support of the civilian authorities.

ITA ARMY POSTURE

The Chief of the General Staff (CGS) has directed the adoption of a **dispersed force posture** within given readiness states in order to protect the force and increase resilience. The **remote working protocol** has been implemented, to the maximum possible extent across the entire Army, taking into account the essential operational commitments (including fighting COVID-19).

The ITA Army is doing its best to preserve its force to be ready and responsive, when called, to support the country in this very challenging and difficult period.

ITA ARMY COVID-19 MAIN TASKS

Upon the request from the Civil Protection Department in the early stages of the emergency, the ITA Army promptly made available helicopters, vehicles and infrastructure in order to speed up the distribution of those materials and medical devices necessary for the management/containment of the COVID-19 epidemic.



¹ Collective term indicating the process by which Italian Armed Forces assets and personnel can be employed in missions normally carried out by civil authorities, other government departments and the community as a whole. These missions range from responses to natural and man-made disasters to law enforcement support, in special events or other domestic activities.

² Military personnel in support to civilian authorities/Police with duties related to the surveillance of sensitive targets and locations.

³ Figures as at 2 April 2020.



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SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO ENFORCE LOCKDOWN

ITA Army has been able to resize and reshape its contribution to the aforementioned operation⁴, in terms of both numbers and duties, in order to assist the police forces in enforcing the lockdown and monitoring individual movements in accordance with the Government decrees.

In addition to this commitment, 5000 extra soldiers distributed throughout the entire country have been placed on 1/3/5 days' notice to move, to reinforce or replace current forces.

Finally, general coordination with government authorities has been significantly enhanced by repositioning 41 liaison officers at the Provincial Police Forces HQ, which will facilitate the overall inter-agency communication and synchronization.



SUPPORT TO THE NATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Since the beginning of the emergency 2 Military Hospital Centres in Rome and in Milan have been supporting the Italian national Healthcare Service in managing the large amount of contagious people. There are many other initiatives undertaken by the ITA Army in this specific sector. More specifically, ITA Army:

- General Hospital "CELIO" hosted (Feb.'20, prior the national emergency outbreak) the quarantine of 8 Italian nationals returned from China. An additional 56 people (the first returnees from Wuhan) were hosted at the Army Olympic Sports Center for medical screening and surveillance under the supervision of CELIO medical staff. The hospital also made available an entire pavilion consisting of 20 intensive care beds for COVID-19 patients;



⁴ Some sensitive targets/locations monitored during regular "Strade Sicure" operation activities are temporarily closed (above all courthouses and places of worship).



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- military medical personnel (60 doctors and 75 nurses) were made available to relieve those civilian hospitals on the brink of collapsing, mainly in the Northern Italian regions;
 - is contributing to the setting up of new medical field facilities (2 military field hospitals in the cities of Piacenza and Crema and other civilian medical field facilities provided/donated by third parties). An additional third medical field hospital is ready to be deployed to further improve the national response to the COVID 19 outbreak.
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- is providing 5 fixed wing aircrafts and 38 rotary wing helicopters with a total amount of 1.130 duty/hours to sustain the resupply chain of medical needs and equipment. They will also conduct emergency medical transportation, providing "negative pressure" bio-containment stretcher for COVID-19 patients;
 - deployed a CBRN Task Force composed of 60 specialists to Bergamo to sanitize potentially contaminated locations, infrastructure and vehicles and identified in each region a tactical decontamination unit to support local administrations for sanitizing purposes;
 - is temporarily enrolling 120 new military doctors and 200 new military nurses specifically for the COVID-19 epidemic. They will serve the Army and the country for the next 12 months. They are specialized in a vast array of different disciplines, ranging from anesthetists to infectious disease specialists;
 - Chemical-Pharmaceutical Research Institute in Florence is supporting the production of disinfectants, germicidal and bactericidal substances. In particular, the efforts have been oriented to the production of hand sanitizer gel (up to 2000 lt./day) to cope with the current national shortage;
 - technical personnel are cooperating with a private firm for the production of ventilators.



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ISOLATION FACILITIES

Since the outbreak of the emergency, the ITA Army set up 36 isolation facilities, with a total number of 3.247 beds available, to combat the spread of COVID-19. These facilities are meant to allow people with mild coronavirus symptoms to self-isolate from society and recover from the virus, allowing hospitals to deal with those experiencing harsher symptoms.

COVID19 - ISOLATION FACILITIES



TRANSPORTATION

In order to sustain the national storage/transportation capabilities, a Logistic Contingency Plan has been developed making available more than 230 trucks with different load capacities. In particular, in some Northern cities, authorities couldn't manage such a high number of coffins and Army units were employed to transport them from morgues to cemeteries and crematoriums in other provinces.



In addition, an Engineering Railway unit of 60 specialists has been made available to sustain the national railway system in case of necessity.

ITA ARMY'S KEY MEASURES

Since the beginning of the emergency, the ITA Army has put in place specific measures to guarantee **resilience** and the health of military personnel, with the aim of providing immediate support to the country while also being ready and fit for future possible COVID-related commitments, wherever and whenever they may happen.



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Most non-operational activities have been curtailed until the end of June, operational commitments however are ongoing with some necessary adjustments. The overall goal is to maintain our commitments, while protecting our people.

The main measures/early Lessons Identified are as follows:

- **C2:** key persons do not stay/work in the same place (building/barracks/camp). The main rule, where applicable, is to have a 14 days rotation as the disease incubation period ranges from 1-14 days;
- **HQs:** smart working for the majority of personnel. HQs at minimum manning with 14 days rotation;
- **Formations/Units:** minimum manning in order to guarantee the basic/security service. Personnel who are uninvolved in the emergency effort are “held at readiness”, at home, to replace colleagues or to be deployed everywhere in the country;
- **International/national Exercises and bilateral cooperation training:** cancelled or postponed, if possible, to the 2nd semester 2020;
- **Self-isolating area for in-service personnel:** each barracks/camp has an “isolation area” dedicated to those showing any symptoms in service;
- **‘On-line and e-learning training’:** keep going with all the training activities which can be done remotely to keep everyone informed and ready to be deployed homeland/overseas as required.

Further useful information at the following links:

<http://www.esercito.difesa.it/Documents/covid19-fattori-stress-resilienza-200323.pdf>

<http://www.esercito.difesa.it/Documents/le-famiglie-al-tempo-del-coronavirus-200323.pdf>