



## **The auxiliary role of the Italian Red Cross to national armed forces medical services in a situation of international armed conflicts**



The auxiliary role to medical services of the Italian Armed Forces is an institutional task of the Italian Red Cross that takes the form of an internal organization made up by the Military Corp and the National Voluntary Nurses. Both these organizations are considered auxiliaries of all Italian armed forces and carry out institutional duties both at home and abroad. These two bodies are mobilized by the National President of the Italian Red Cross at the request of the Italian Ministry of defence to help the health facilities of the armed forces used in national and international missions, providing doctors, nurses, equipment that are not directly available from the armed force. The military corps of the Italian Red Cross is able to project their own staff and their own means, equipped with new technology, in the various operating theatres in medical support to the armed forces and in rescue operations for public national and international disasters.

### RIFERIMENTI NORMATIVI

- Decreto Legislativo 15 mar 2010, n.66  
(Codice dell'ordinamento militare)

Art. 196 del Decreto legislativo n.66/2010: Compiti in tempo di guerra, di grave crisi internazionale o di conflitto armato

1. L'Associazione italiana della Croce rossa in tempo di guerra, di grave crisi internazionale o di conflitto armato:

a) contribuisce, in conformità a quanto previsto dalle convenzioni di Ginevra del 12 agosto 1949, rese esecutive dalla legge 27 ottobre 1951, n. 1739, allo sgombero e alla cura dei feriti e dei malati di guerra nonché delle vittime dei conflitti armati e allo svolgimento dei compiti di carattere sanitario e assistenziale connessi all'attività di difesa civile;

b) disimpegna il servizio di ricerca e di assistenza dei prigionieri di guerra, degli internati e dei dispersi.

Art. 1626 del Decreto legislativo n.66/2010: Corpo speciale volontario

Per il funzionamento dei suoi servizi in tempo di pace, di guerra o di grave crisi internazionale, la Croce Rossa Italiana arruola proprio personale che costituisce un corpo speciale volontario, ausiliario delle Forze Armate.

Il Corpo, al quale sia accede mediante arruolamento volontario, inquadra nei propri ruoli:

Ufficiali medici, dei servizi (commissari e contabili), farmacisti, cappellani;

Sottufficiali, graduati e militi: infermieri, portaferiti, automobilisti , dei servizi.

Il personale militare è normalmente in congedo ed è richiamabile per circostanze addestrative e/o operative.

Un'aliquota di personale in servizio continuativo, costituente la prima linea di intervento, è deputato in tempi ordinari al mantenimento ed aggiornamento delle strutture.

**The Military Corp of the Italian Red Cross (role after WWII)**

### **A. COREAN WAR**

In December 1951, the Military Corp had set up a field ospital near Seul, named Hospital 68, that was framed in the eighth army of the United States of America. During the mission, which ended at the end of 1954, it alternated over a hundred people, including Volunteer nurses. The participation of the italian military corp was the only participation of Italian armed forces to the Mission in Korea although Italy was not yet a member of the United Nations. It was also this experience that helped Italy to join United Nations.



## B. CONGO

In november 1960, the Italian Air Force participated the UN Mission in Congo with the task of ensuring 70% of links between the various United Nations camps spread through the african State. During this mission the Military Corp of the Italian Red Cross secured healthcare support with several field hospitals in support of Italian troops. The mission ended in 1964.

## **C. ROMANIA**

In 1989, at the request of the Italian Ministry of Defence, the Military Corp employed personnel and emergency vehicles in Romania carrying humanitarian aid by ship “San Marco” of the Italian Navy.

## **D. BALKAN CRISIS : MISSION “ALTHEA”**

From 1993 to 1997 the Military Corp of the Italian Red Cross was involved in several activities of health support to the Italian armed forces in missions organised by nato and the United Nations (providing qualified personnel as doctors and nurses, equipment and logistics :

1. Health Support of 68<sup>a</sup> Field Hospital to U.N.H.C.R. at Falconara Airport (AN) - Balkan crisis 1993-1995;
2. Transportation and Logistics in Humanitarian Aid - Former Yugoslavia 1996;
3. Health and Logistical Support for Albanian refugees in Fondi and Marina di Massa shelters 1997-1998;
4. Health and Logistical Support to BTG corps of railwaymen - S.F.O.R. Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1997;
5. Health Support with n.1 health unit in Kukes and n.2 First Aid units in Kavaje – Albany , Mission “Arcobaleno” March-August 1999;
6. Organizational and operative support to health project in Kosovo: renovation and construction of first-aid stations in Pec/Peje (from January 2001 to 2003 during KFOR Mission) .

## **E. ERITREA**

In support of the Italian Ministry of Defence during the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE), the Military Corp the Corps employed, by November 2000 to July 2005, doctors and nurses in support of Italian contingent stationed in the African territory on UN mandate.

Coming to analyze the most recent events, a decisive and important contribution was provided by the Military Corp during the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan:

## F. IRAQ

Mission “Ancient Babylon” . The Italian Red Cross militaries ensured :

- a form of surgery and intensive care, with its staff, upon completion of the field hospital (Role 2 +) of army health, located at the military base "Family Quarter";
- a Health Unit (Role 1 +), with its staff and logistical structures-qualified support, in support of the command of the Italian military contingent, at the military base "White Horse";
- the provision of further specialist medical staff for the completion of the predicted organic Role 2 +;
- the activation of a military ambulance service, named "Blue Light Matrix", complete with crews, to ensure health interventions in the Area of responsibility of the Italian military contingent;
- the use of a health care Team for Major Incidents and support personnel at the command operations room of the Italian military contingent;
- the use of two water purifiers for the abstraction of drinking water in favour of multinational contingent.

During the 1.215 days spent in Iraqi territory 1.054 men between officers and soldiers of the Military Corp and 265 Volunteer Nurses committed to ensuring health and logistical competitions required by the Ministry of Defence. Their task was not limited to health activities in favour of the italian troops, the military base of White Horse with the core of the Military Corp was the theatre in which they were performed over 1500 health care to civilians every year.

The mission of the Military Corp ended on November 21st 2006.









## **G. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

The Military Corp ensured, during the mission “Enduring Freedom” before (from 2003 to 2006), and now during the mission ISAF a sanitary asset composed by 1 anaesthetist and 2 nurses of critical area in order to complete the Aeromedical Staging Unit of the Task Force Air ( in which the Italian Army is involved), and ensuring the strategic and tactical medical evacuations from the Afghan operational theatre. The rate of the Military Corp is required to complete the Italian Army contingent deployed in the territory.



## H. AFGHANISTAN

As part of the ISAF mission, from 2003, the Military Corp provides physicians and nurses for the completion of the health structures of the Italian army contingent stationed in Herat, thereby contributing to the functioning of the device “Aero Medical Evacuation Team” and of the military hospital of Role1 class. By October 2011 an additional physician contribute to the control of the waters. The Regional Command West (RC-W), the area under Italian responsibility, is a vast region of Western Afghanistan (as big as the North Italy) that extends over the provinces of Herat, Badghis, Ghowr and Farah.





