



F-15E shot down in Iran: co-pilot recovered at night by US special forces. He was hiding among the Zagros Mountains.

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He remained for hours behind Iranian lines, hidden among the mountains and hunted by local forces. Then, at night, the recovery. The co-pilot of the US F-15E shot down in Iran was brought back to safety at the end of a high-risk operation conducted by American special forces in the heart of enemy territory.

After the aircraft was shot down, the two crew members ejected and separated. The pilot was recovered in the early stages, while the second man, a **Weapons Systems Officer (WSO)** with the rank of **colonel**, remained isolated in a mountainous area in the southwest of Iran. According to available information, the military officer hid in the province of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, within the Zagros Mountains range, a rugged and difficult-to-control territory.

For almost two days, he avoided capture, maintaining contact with US forces and applying survival procedures in case of isolation in hostile territory. The area's morphology, characterized by rugged terrain and low urbanization, made both the location and any potential recovery intervention particularly complex.

The operation was conducted on the night between April 4 and 5, once the military's position was precisely identified. According to international sources, the recovery required a complex coordination between air assets and special units, with coverage from aircraft and surveillance systems. The intervention was reportedly executed with rapid and targeted methods, aimed at minimizing exposure to a possible reaction from Iranian forces present in the area.

Officially, there is talk of the use of "US special forces." There are no direct confirmations on the involvement of specific units, although the level of complexity and the operational context indicate the use of highly qualified personnel. As is typical in such operations, many details remain classified.

Meanwhile, Iranian authorities had launched ground operations to locate the missing military officer, increasing the risk of direct contact. The recovery, which took place deep within Iranian territory, represents a particularly significant episode from both an operational and political standpoint, in a context already characterized by high tensions.

Beyond the immediate dynamics, the episode highlights the capability of the US armed forces to conduct recovery missions in highly hostile environments, confirming a consolidated doctrine: leave no personnel behind. In an increasingly complex and less defined scenario, such operations reflect the nature of modern international crises, where military activities and the political dimension intertwine without a clear dividing line.

News link: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/04/04/us-pilot-rescue-iran-f15-crash/>