

Return to Italy of the Remains of Those Killed in Bosnia

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This morning, the remains of the four Italian service members killed last Thursday in the tragic crash of a Chinook helicopter in Bosnia, which went down during a mission as part of Operation Eufor Althea, will return to Ciampino military airport. Prime Minister **Giorgia Meloni** and Defense Minister **Guido Crosetto** will be present to receive the coffins.

On board the State aircraft were the bodies of Sergeants **Simone Ruggia** and **Claudio Marchesi**, and the two members of the Corpo Militare della Croce Rossa, Lieutenant **Franco Adriano Zecchillo** and Sergeant **Laura Procacci**. Funeral services are scheduled for this week, although the possibility that the judicial authorities may order autopsies remains to be assessed. Those injured who are deemed fit to travel may also return to Italy on the same flight.

Meanwhile, from his hospital bed in Tuzla, medical Lieutenant Colonel **Flavio Favari**, the third member of the CRI Medevac team and the sole survivor of the medical team, spoke emotionally: "*It is a miracle that I am still alive. I only remember that it was a matter of a second, an*

extremely violent impact". A total of 11 people on board were injured in the accident.

The investigations: three inquiries underway and black box analysis

Three separate investigations are focusing on the disaster, including one launched by Bosnian authorities. In Rome, the military prosecutor's office is proceeding against persons unknown for the offense of **negligent loss**, while the ordinary prosecutor's office is investigating possible charges of **negligent disaster and manslaughter**.

Investigators will focus their examination on the Chinook wreckage and analysis of the **black box**, considered key steps in reconstructing the sequence of events. Italian judicial offices are working closely with the Defense Ministry's technical commission dispatched to the scene, which will interview the pilots and witnesses.

At this stage, **external action or a terrorist motive remain ruled out**: investigators are focusing on a possible sudden technical malfunction or human error. Crucial evidence will also come from a **video** entered into the case file, documenting the final moments of the flight: the footage reportedly shows the aircraft's desperate attempt to gain altitude before entering a spin and crashing from about 50 meters in the Brcko area.

Remembrance and commemorations

The Chinook, which took off from Viterbo with a technical stop at Pratica di Mare and carried a total of fifteen military personnel, was conducting a delicate **medical evacuation mission**.

Meanwhile, in Rome, **a commemorative space has been set up in the chapel of the "Luigi Pierantoni" barracks in memory of the two CRI personnel who died.** In Barletta, Lieutenant Zecchillo's hometown, Mayor Cosimo Cannito will lay a wreath on Monday at the foot of the aircraft monument dedicated to airmen killed in peacekeeping missions, together with representatives of the Corpo Militare della Croce Rossa.