

Rome, state funeral for the four service members killed during EUFOR Althea operation in Bosnia

The ceremony at the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri in the presence of the President of the Republic

Published on 03/11/2026

Today, November 3, 2026, the Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri in Rome hosted the solemn funeral rites for the four Italian service members who died on October 29 in the crash of an Esercito Italiano CH-47 Chinook helicopter in Bosnia-Herzegovina during activities under the EUFOR Althea mission.

President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella attended the funeral ceremony, together with the State's highest civilian and military authorities.

Also present were Defense Minister Guido Crosetto, Chief of Defense General Luciano Portolano, and Chief of Staff of the Army Lieutenant General Carmine Masiello.

The funeral rites were a moment of reflection and mourning for the Armed Forces, the Croce Rossa Italiana, and the entire country, united in remembrance of the four service members who fell in the line of duty.

Remembering the four fallen service members

A final farewell was paid to Sergeant Simone Ruggia and Sergeant Claudio Marchesi, members of the Aviazione dell'Esercito, and Lieutenant Franco Adriano Zecchillo and Sergeant Laura Procacci, serving in the Corpo Militare Volontario della Croce Rossa Italiana.

Four lives, four personal and professional paths united by the choice to serve their country, even far beyond its national borders, as part of international missions supporting peace and stability.

During the religious service, Defense Minister Guido Crosetto remembered Simone, Claudio, Franco Adriano, and Laura, underscoring the meaning of their life choices and their service.

The minister described them as an example of those who chose to «stand on the side of good», contributing through their commitment to building peace and bringing closer together communities profoundly marked by the divisions of history.

His words recalled the role performed every day by Italian service members deployed in international operational theaters, where service to the nation also means protecting security, supporting local populations, and safeguarding stability.

General Masiello's message: a moral legacy for future generations

On the occasion of the funeral rites, Chief of Staff of the Army Lieutenant General Carmine Masiello paid tribute to the four service members through Army Order of the Day No. 45/2026, dedicated to their memory.

In the document, General Masiello expressed the condolences and solidarity of the entire Armed Force with the families of the fallen and their fellow service members, stressing that the memory of the four service members will continue to live on among those who work every day, in Italy and abroad, to preserve peace.

The Chief of Staff recalled the values, principles, and rules that guided the conduct and lives of the four fallen service members, highlighting the significance of their service and sacrifice.

As emphasized in the Order of the Day, their sacrifice will become part of the Esercito Italiano's moral heritage, offering concrete testimony to the sense of duty and spirit of service that characterize military life.

General Masiello also reiterated that their example will continue to guide the men and women of the Armed Forces in carrying out their duties, representing a moral legacy to be safeguarded and passed on to future generations.

The condolences of the Armed Forces and the Italian Red Cross

The ceremony at the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri symbolically brought together the Italian Army and the Italian Red Cross, two institutions linked by a long history of cooperation in rescue operations, medical assistance, and support for military missions.

The loss of the four service members deeply affected both organizations, once again underscoring the risks faced by personnel deployed on international operations, including during routine training and support activities.

With today's solemn funeral, Italy paid its final tribute to Simone Ruggia, Claudio Marchesi, Franco Adriano Zecchillo, and Laura Procacci, four servants of the State whose memory will remain linked to the mission carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to the values of dedication, solidarity, and service to the Nation.

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