Beat: Local

Military helicopter crashes in central Romania, killing 8

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USPA News - A military helicopter crashed in central Romania on Friday while participating in a training exercise, killing eight service members and seriously injuring two others, the country`s defense ministry said. The cause of the crash was not immediately known.

The accident happened at around 10:40 a.m. local time when a Romanian-built IAR-330 aircraft went down in a field near the central village of MÄƒlÃƒ¢ncrav, located in Sibiu County of Transylvania. The aircraft was carrying a total of ten people, composed of two pilots, two mechanics, one engineer and five soldiers. A defense ministry spokesperson said eight service members were killed in the crash while the only two survivors were seriously injured and taken to an area hospital. The crash site was first reported at 10:50 a.m. when a shepherd in the area called 112. Other witnesses reported seeing the aircraft on fire before it went down. The helicopter was flying from the 71st Air Base in Cluj County to participate in a training exercise in BraÃˆ™ov County. "I want to express my sorrow for the tragic accident that happened in Sibiu County today and killed eight soldiers and injured two others," Romanian President Traian BÄƒsescu said. "It is a sad moment for the Romanian Army, the Romanian people and for me personally. I send my sincere condolences to the bereaved families and all those who were close to them." Romania has experienced a number of aircraft accidents over the past few years. Five Ukrainian citizens were killed in April 2012 when a private helicopter crashed in eastern Romania while en-route to extinguish a fire in Turkey, and ten soldiers were killed in July 2010 when an Antonov An-2 aircraft crashed in southeastern Romania.

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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