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Russian Severnaya Coal Mine Explosion: 6 Killed During Rescue Mission For 26 Missing Miners

BY VISHAKHA SONAWANE ON 02/28/16 AT 4:47 AM



Men work 540 meters below the surface in the Severnaya Glubokaya mine, outside the town Zapolyarny, on Feb. 04, 2008.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/AFP/MAXIM MARMUR

UPDATE: 6:05 a.m. EST — As many as 36 people have died in explosions and a collapse at northern Russia's Severnaya mine, according to the Associated Press. The explosions are said to have been triggered by a methane gas leak.

According to Russian emergency services, five rescue workers and a mine worker were among those dead in the three explosions — two of the blasts occurred Thursday and one on Sunday.

Original story:

An explosion at a mine in northern Russia killed six people, most of them rescuers, local officials said Sunday. The explosion occurred in Severnaya mine in Vorkuta town of Komi region, where 26 miners went missing following an accident Thursday.

The blast took place during rescue operations to save the 26 trapped miners. Rescue workers have been evacuated from the mine following the explosion as a second blast was likely, authorities warned, according to [RT.com](#). Of the 110 people who were trapped in the mine, 80 have been rescued, the report added.

"Six people died, five of them rescuers," Anton Kovalishin, a spokesman for the emergencies ministry in the Komi region told [Agence France-Presse](#). The Severnaya mine accident appears to be Russia's worst mining accident in recent years, AFP reported.

Rescue operations have been hampered due to technical reasons following the blast, according to [Sputnik News](#). "The danger zone of the work site has been recalculated and expanded. Carrying out any work is impossible," the mine's technical director Denis Paikin said.

On Thursday, four miners were killed and 26 went missing after a cave in at the Severnaya mine. Officials launched a massive search operation and until now had

reportedly declined to announce the missing miners dead. The emergencies ministry had earlier stated that no contact could be made with the missing miners.

However, Emergencies Minister Vladimir Puchkov said Sunday that the 26 missing miners were likely to be dead. "Unfortunately, we are forced to acknowledge that all the conditions at that section of the mine would not allow a person to survive," AFP quoted Puchkov as saying on LifeNews television channel.

Following the Thursday's blast, President Vladimir Putin ordered the government to create a special commission to investigate the accident. Three days of mourning has been announced in Komi for the victims.

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