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# Kazakhstan mine fire leaves at least 42 dead

🕒 11 hours ago



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## By Ruth Comerford

BBC News

### **The death toll caused by a fire at a mine in Kazakhstan has risen to 42.**

The blaze ignited on Saturday and 32 people were initially reported dead at the Kostenko mine, which is owned by steel giant ArcelorMittal.

The new figure was confirmed by the ministry for emergency situations as rescuers pulled bodies from the rubble.

The search for four missing miners is ongoing at the partially destroyed mine.

Emergency services are searching for the miners in two main areas of the wreckage, spaced more than 4 kilometres apart.

"The search operation is hampered by the presence of destroyed mining equipment, as well as rubble in some places", the ministry said in a statement.

ArcelorMittal Temirtau, the local unit of Luxembourg-based steelmaker ArcelorMittal, said 206 of 252 people at the Kostenko mine had been evacuated.

The fire, which is believed to have been sparked by a methane blast, broke out on the same day as a deal to nationalise the company's mining operations in Kazakhstan was confirmed.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had ordered investment in the country's biggest steel mill to be halted prior to the blaze as he pushed for nationalisation.

He expressed his condolences to the families of the bereaved, calling the incident a "tragedy" and describing ArcelorMittal Temirtau, the local unit of the company, as "the worst" in Kazakhstan's history "from the point of view of cooperation with the government and the enterprise".

"Now we will think of taking a decision in regards to the enterprise itself," he told Reuters.

ArcelorMittal said it would cooperate with authorities and promised compensation, according to AFP news agency.

It added that the first stage of the nationalising process is underway and it "will commit to finalising this transaction as soon as possible".

The regional health department said 15 of those who have been hospitalised are being treated for carbon monoxide poisoning.

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his condolences to his Kazakh ally.

"Please convey words of sympathy and support to the families of the killed miners," he said in a statement.

"We hope the miners that are underground will be saved."

This is second fatal incident in the last two months at a site operated by ArcelorMittal in Kazakhstan. In August, four miners were killed after a fire broke out at the Karaganda mine.

And in November 2022, five people died and four others were hospitalised after a methane gas leak at a mine in the same area.

ArcelorMittal Temirtau owns 15 coal and ore mines in Kazakhstan.

In 2022, ArcelorMittal, a Luxembourg-based steel giant, bought Aberdeen metal recycling business John Lawrie Metals.

The company sponsored the construction of of the ArcelorMittal Orbit that stands in London's Olympic park.

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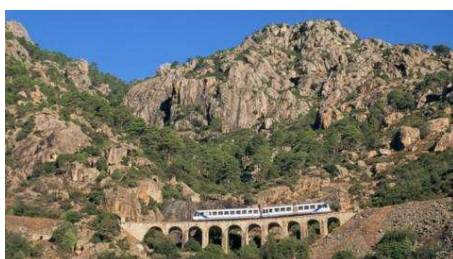


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