

The Guardian digital pack  
**Every paper.**  
**On your tablet**

Start your free 30 day trial now →

World | Sun Feb 28, 2016 4:46am EST

Related: WORLD, RUSSIA

# Miners trapped after accident in Russia's Arctic pronounced dead

MOSCOW

The 26 miners who were trapped in a Russian coal mine above the Arctic circle have died and rescue operations have been halted after a third blast underground killed several rescue workers, emergency services said on Sunday.

The miners were trapped on Thursday after a sudden leak of methane gas caused two blasts that led parts of the Severnaya mine in Vorkuta to collapse.

President Vladimir Putin ordered a government commission to be set up to look into the incident at the mine operated by Vorkutaugol, a subsidiary of Severstal.

"The circumstances in the affected part of the mine did not allow anyone to survive," Russia's Emergencies Minister Vladimir Puchkov said in televised comments after visiting the mine.

"In the underground space where the 26 miners were, there are high temperatures and no oxygen."

Denis Paikin, Vorkutaugol's technical director, concurred with Puchkov's assessment.

The Emergencies Ministry said on its website that underground rescue operations had been halted after a third blast early on Sunday killed six people.

A Severstal spokeswoman confirmed to Reuters that six people had died in Sunday's blast and that five of them were rescue workers.

The total death toll from the accident now stands at 36 people.

The episode is the latest in a long line of accidents in Russia's coal mining industry and is likely to raise fresh questions about how strictly safety rules are being followed.

Poor safety standards were blamed for an explosion at the Ulyanovskaya coal mine in the southern Siberian region of Kemerovo in March 2007. The Ulyanovskaya disaster claimed the lives of miners in Russia's worst mining accident since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

The head of the Komi republic, where the Vorkuta mine is located, has declared a three-day mourning period in the republic starting from Sunday.

(Reporting by Alexander Winning and Polina Devitt; Editing by David Goodman)

EDITOR'S CHOICE



**Trump's obsession with WW2 generals puts military experts on edge**

The Guardian digital pack  
**Every paper.**  
**On your tablet**

Start your free 30 day trial now →

PHOTOS OF THE WEEK



Our most compelling images of the week. [Slideshow](#) »

[Syria's descent into war](#)

[Iran votes](#)

REUTERS

★ **WHITE HOUSE RUN** ★

Build the perfect candidate.

Now available for iPhone

Download on the App Store