

Families of Komi Mine Blast Victims to Receive Compensation

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Authorities began issuing compensation on Tuesday to the families of victims who died in Monday's methane gas explosion at the Vorkutinskaya mine in the far northern Komi republic, Emergency Situations Minister Vladimir Puchkov told reporters.

On Monday, Puchkov said the families of those who died would each receive 2 million rubles (\$66,000), RIA-Novosti reported.

The minister said the rescue workers had finished their search and rescue operation and found 18 bodies.

"At the moment, the bodies are being identified; medical staff and psychologists are working with the families," he said.

There were 259 people underground at the time of the accident, and most of them were

evacuated. Twenty-six miners were working close to the site of the blast when it occurred, and 18 of them died.

The blast at the Vorkutinskaya mine, owned by steel giant Severstal, occurred at 10:28 a.m. at a depth of about 800 meters.

The Investigative Committee said Monday it suspected the blast was caused by a violation of safety standards, and had opened a criminal investigation into the accident.

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