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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

More Than 40 Russians Missing in Nepal Following Deadly Earthquake

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Nepalese people walk along the deserted road near the collapsed house after the earthquake in Kathmandu, Nepal, April 29, 2015.

More than 40 Russians, including two diplomats, are unaccounted for in Nepal following the devastating 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit the country Saturday, Russian media reported Wednesday.

“I'm sure they are alive and well, it's simply that communications are down there and it's difficult to contact anyone,” state news agency TASS cited Emergency Situations Minister Vladimir Puchkov as saying.

Two Russian diplomats are missing after going hiking in the mountains shortly before the earthquake hit the country, another news report said.

Alexei Lipeyev and Maria Yakovleva, a married couple who work as press attaches in the Russian Embassy in Pakistan, have not been heard from since April 22, three days before the earthquake hit outside Nepal's capital Kathmandu, state news agency Sputnik reported

Tuesday.

Lipeyev, 25, and Yakovleva were in Nepal on vacation to hike around mountain villages near Kathmandu, the report said.

The death toll from the earthquake has exceeded 5,000, and nearly 11,000 people were injured, according to Nepal's National Emergency Operation Center, NPR reported.

Between four and seven Russians were reported missing on Mount Everest on Sunday, a day after the quake struck, triggering avalanches on the mountain. Later it was reported that some Russian climbers had made contact and that they were planning to continue their climb. It was not immediately clear whether the news reports referred to the same groups.

At least 17 climbers were killed by avalanches on Everest set off by the earthquake, and at least 37 others were injured, Nepalese officials have said.

Russia sent two planes carrying rescue workers to Nepal on Sunday, and will send another four airplanes to deliver humanitarian aid and evacuate people, state news agency RIA Novosti reported.

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