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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Planned Avalanche Buries Russian Town, No Warning to Residents

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A snow slide descended on the Russian town of Kirovsk, in the Khibiny Mountains above the Arctic Circle, on Thursday night, knocking out windows, snapping trees and killing at least one person, media reports said.

The avalanche was intentionally triggered — apparently to prevent an even bigger snow slide — but residents of this town in the Murmansk region received no warning, the Flash Nord news portal reported.

At least one person was was killed and buried under the snow slide, a spokesperson for the regional branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry was quoted by the TASS news agency as saying.

The victim was an employee of the local avalanche safety service, the RIA Novosti news agency reported, citing an unidentified official in the city's emergency services.

The official also confirmed that the snow slide appeared to have erupted after emergency workers triggered an avalanche, RIA Novosti reported.

Kirovsk's district of Kukisvumchorr was hit particularly badly by the snow slide, according to online accounts and media reports. Photographs posted online by the Severpost news portal showed piles of snow inside an apartment with broken windows.

The snow slide was accompanied by a loud sound, resembling an explosion, a local woman, Anastasia Demidova, was quoted by the Komsomolskaya Pravda as saying.

“The blast was so powerful and so loud that I even jumped up,” she was quoted as saying. “Literally within three minutes, all of the Kukisvumchorr district was covered by a white cloud.”

The avalanche also downed trees and buried cars and small parking garages under the snow, local residents' Kirovsk-Khibiny online group said on VKontakte social network.

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