

‘Human Error’ Likely Caused Siberian Arms Depot Blast, Official Says

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TASS

A series of blasts at a Russian military base in the Siberian region of Krasnoyarsk may have been caused by “human error,” a senior Defense Ministry official said Tuesday.

Dramatic footage posted online Monday showed huge explosions on the horizon after an ammunition depot caught fire, with flames leaping into the sky followed by belching smoke. The blasts injured 12 people with one [missing](#) and led to a mass evacuation of 16,000 residents from the nearby city of Achinsk.

Embed:

Video of spectacular shockwave from explosion at military unit in Krasnoyarsk Krai of Russia pic.twitter.com/oyeg3hIb5F

— Liveuamap (@Liveuamap) [5 August 2019](#)

Human error is being considered as the preliminary cause of the explosions, Deputy Defense Minister Dmitry Bulgakov was [cited](#) by Interfax as saying. Prosecutors and investigators will work to establish why the series of blasts were triggered, he added.

The fires that have been raging for hours are expected to be extinguished by the end of the day Tuesday, Bulgakov was quoted as saying by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

The military has [deployed](#) robots to battle the flames. Bulgakov [said](#) that 70 sappers will also be sent to the region from Moscow to help in clearing any remaining ammunition.

Related article: [Blast Rocks Siberian Arms Depot, Two Hospitalized](#)

Rusal, the world's largest aluminum producer outside China, said it suspended operations at its Achinsk alumina plant and evacuated all but essential staff to ensure their safety. The plant is Russia's largest producer of alumina, a raw material which is smelted into aluminum.

Loading is operating on schedule at Russian oil giant Rosneft's Achinsk oil refinery 30 kilometers from the base, the state-run TASS news agency quoted a refinery spokesperson as saying.

A Russian soldier was killed, TASS cited a source as saying. A Defense Ministry source denied the information about the soldier's death to RIA Novosti.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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