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Russian Peacekeeper Wounded in Deadly Nagorno-Karabakh Mine Blast

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Nagorno-Karabakh is believed to be one of the most heavily mined regions of the former Soviet Union.
Stanislav Krasilnikov / TASS

A Russian peacekeeper has been wounded and an Azerbaijani soldier killed in a mine explosion in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, Russia's Defense Ministry said Monday.

Four emergency workers from the unrecognized ethnic Armenian republic of Nagorno-Karabakh were also wounded in the region's Tartar district, the Defense Ministry was cited as saying by Interfax.

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The explosion happened during searches for missing soldiers by a joint group that includes Russian peacekeepers, Azeri troops, Nagorno-Karabakh emergency personnel and Red Cross officials.

The Russian peacekeeper was reportedly taken to the Azeri capital of Baku with non-life-threatening injuries.

The Russian Defense Ministry said earlier Monday that it deployed more than 100 mine-clearing experts to the region. More than 100 people have been killed and almost 300 wounded by undetonated land mines near Nagorno-Karabakh since the 1990s, the United Nations said in 2005.

The UN Mine Action Service said it was ready to deploy a needs-assessment mission in Nagorno-Karabakh in early December.

Some 2,000 Russian peacekeepers are overseeing a Moscow-brokered peace deal that Azerbaijan and Armenia signed on Nov. 10 after six weeks of armed conflict that left thousands dead and displaced.

More than 4,000 civilians have been killed and over 8,000 wounded in the conflict, according to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Armenian separatists ceded three districts to Azerbaijan as part of the peace deal.

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