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Russian Gold Mine Accident Kills Two

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File photo of the Asacha gold mine. **ITAR-TASS**

At least two miners died after a rockfall at a Trans-Siberian Gold company-owned mine on Russia's Pacific coast, emergency officials said Wednesday.

Three of the five engineers who were installing ventilation systems at the Asacha deposit in the Kamchatka region climbed out on their own, the Emergency Situations Ministry's regional branch said in a statement.

"Two people who failed to get out of the rubble were found dead," it said, adding that the governor and administration of the Russian Far East region had expressed condolences to the victims' families.

The regional Emergency Situations Ministry said it ended the rescue operation at the mine some 6,200 kilometers east of Moscow 12 hours after the accident occurred.

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Investigators are looking into the cause of the rock collapse. State media, citing Kamchatka's mining association president Alexander Orlov, said that Trans-Siberian Gold's subsidiary Trevozhnoye Zarevo had seen "no serious safety violations" in its nine years of operation at the site.

Over the past decade, the Trans-Siberian Gold website's health and safety section showed one of the estimated 650 employees dying and nine others being injured at work.

This is the second high-profile gold mining accident in Russia in recent years, after an October 2019 dam collapse killed 15 gold miners in Siberia's Krasnoyarsk region.

Russia, one of the world's top gold producers, ramped up mining output to over 184 metric tons in January-August 2020 compared to 178 tons in January-August 2019.

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