

Russian Rescuers Call Off Search for Trapped Miners

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A rescue team at the entrance to the Pioneer gold mine. **Russian Emergencies Ministry / TASS**

Emergency crews have called off the search and rescue operation at a gold mine in Far East Russia's Amur region, where 13 miners were trapped by a rockslide two weeks ago, the mine's operator [said](#) Monday.

"It was decided to stop the rescue operation at the Pioneer mine on April 1," operator Pokrovsky Rudnik said in a statement.

"The lives of the rescuers and mine workers involved in the operation are in danger due to the high probability of a repeated collapse and flooding," it added.

Rescuers have been unable to establish contact with the Pioneer miners since a rock collapse on March 18, though officials said they believed the 13 miners may still be alive.

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State media, citing anonymous emergency service sources, [reported](#) last week that the miners had likely drowned from flooding.

Monday's statement did not explicitly say the miners were presumed dead, but Pioneer's deputy director Alexei Afanasyev expressed condolences and promised financial support to their friends and relatives.

Pioneer's managing director Alexei Biryukov was arrested last Monday on charges of violating safety rules, a crime punishable by up to seven years in prison.

Pioneer is one of the world's largest gold mines and one of the most productive in Russia.

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