

Beat: Miscellaneous

Mine collapse kills 16 workers in western China

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USPA News - Rescue workers in China's western region of Xinjiang have recovered the bodies of sixteen people who were trapped when a coal mine collapsed, state-run media reported on Saturday. Nearly a dozen others were rescued and taken to hospital.

The accident happened at around 11:30 p.m. local time on Friday when 33 people were working underground at a coal mine in Tiechanggou Township of Midong District, which is located in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang. Only six of those working at the mine were able to escape safely when it caved in. The state-run Xinhua news agency, quoting the Xinjiang Administration of Coal Mine Safety, said rescue workers continued working through the night to rescue the survivors and to recover the bodies of those killed. The total number of casualties was 16 dead and 11 injured, though the conditions of those injured were not disclosed. The cause of Friday's collapse was not immediately known. Safety conditions at mines in China have rapidly improved in recent years, though they continue to be ranked as the world's most dangerous with 1,049 deaths reported in 2013, according to official figures. The Chinese government reported 1,384 fatalities in 2012, down from 1,973 fatalities in 2011, 2,433 fatalities in 2010, and 2,631 fatalities in 2009. China shut down scores of small mines in recent years to improve safety and efficiency in the mining industry. The government has also ordered all mines to build emergency shelter systems which need to be equipped with machines to produce oxygen and air conditioning, protective walls and airtight doors to protect workers against toxic gases and other hazardous factors. One of China's worst mining accidents in recent years happened in November 2009 when 104 workers were killed in several explosions at a coal mine in northeastern Heilongjiang province. More recently, 17 workers were killed in early July when a gas explosion tore through a coal mine near Urumqi.

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