Beat: News

Gas explosion kills at least 13 miners in southwest China

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USPA News - At least thirteen people were killed early Monday morning when a gas explosion tore through a coal mine in southwestern China, provincial authorities said, adding that one miner remained missing. More than 40 workers were able to escape safely.

The accident happened at around 12:30 a.m. local time on Monday when a gas explosion occurred inside a shaft of the Hongtutian Coal Mine near the city of Qujing in Fuyuan County, which is located in southwest China`s Yunnan province, according to the provincial Production Safety Supervision and Administration Department. The department said a total of 56 people were working underground at the time of the accident. Of the 56 workers, 42 were able to escape without injury while 14 were trapped. Rescue workers had recovered thirteen bodies by 6:50 a.m., with one more worker remaining unaccounted for. It was not immediately known what caused Monday`s accident, but the state-run Xinhua news agency said the privately-owned mine was properly licensed for operation. 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 2012, 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 country 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 the worst mining accidents in China in recent years happened in November 2009 when 104 workers were killed after several explosions at a coal mine in Heilongjiang province.

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