**Beat: Health**

# Gas explosion kills 21 miners in northwest China

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**USPA News -** A gas explosion killed twenty-one miners early Friday morning at a coal mine in northwestern China, the government said, but the exact cause was not immediately known. More than a dozen other miners were able to escape.

The blast occurred at around 1:40 a.m. local time at the Baiyanggou coal mine in Hutubi County of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, according to Zhou Xiuling, a spokesman for the State Administration of Work Safety. A total of 34 miners were working underground when it happened. Thirteen miners managed to escape the mine, including one who was freed by rescue workers, but his or her condition was not immediately known. The bodies of the 21 other miners were recovered later in the day, officials said, giving no details about what may have caused the accident. While safety conditions at mines in China have improved according to statistic from the Chinese government, they are still ranked the most dangerous with 1,384 deaths reported in 2012, a significant decrease from the 1,973 fatalities in 2011. The Chinese government reported 2,433 fatalities in 2010 and 2,631 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 are 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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