

Coal mine explosion in rebel-held Donetsk in Ukraine kills more than 30 people, local authority says

Updated Wed 4 Mar 2015, 7:06pm

More than 30 people have been killed and 14 more injured in an early morning blast at a coal mine in the eastern Ukrainian rebel stronghold of Donetsk, a local official said.

"According to preliminary information, more than 30 people were killed," local mining safety service chief Vladimir Tsymbalenko said of the explosion at the Zasyadko coal mine.

"Rescue workers have not yet come to the place of the explosion, they are removing the poisonous gas and then will go down."

Miners' relatives were gathering at the entrance to the Zasyadko mine desperately trying to get more information, a reporter at the scene said.

Local officials said about 70 people were working in the mine when the explosion happened.

One worker, leaving the mine in dirty overalls, said he had heard that 45 people were still trapped underground, though there was no immediate confirmation of this figure.

The cause of the blast was not immediately clear.

A welder at the mine, who gave his name as Oleg, said he had heard that 45 people were trapped, and one had been rescued.

"I've been down the pit for 23 years, and this is the fourth explosion that I can recall," he said.

"If they didn't get them out straight away, then later they will only retrieve bodies."

"An explosion is a terrible thing."

An explosion at Zasyadko in 2007 killed 106 people.

Reuters

Topics: disasters-and-accidents, ukraine

First posted Wed 4 Mar 2015, 5:45pm



PHOTO: Family members wait anxiously outside the Zasyadko coal mine in Donetsk. (Reuters: Baz Ratner)

RELATED STORY: Death toll from Ukraine mine accidents rises

MAP: Ukraine