

Beat: News

19 rescued after quake triggers collapse at Polish mine

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USPA News - Nineteen miners were rescued Wednesday after a small earthquake caused a cave-in at a copper mine in western Poland, the mine's operator said. Their conditions were not immediately known, although none of them were believed to have been seriously injured.

The 4.7-magnitude earthquake at 10:09 p.m. local time on Tuesday was centered about 2 kilometers (1.2 mile) west of the town of Polkowice, or 69 kilometers (42 miles) southwest of Poznan. It struck about 2 kilometers (1.2 mile) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to the European-Mediterranean Seismological Center (EMSC). Dariusz Wyborski, a spokesman for state-controlled mine operator KGHM, Europe's second-largest copper producer, said the earthquake caused a cave-in at a copper mine in Rudna. The site, where nearly two dozen miners were at work, is located several kilometers (miles) east of the earthquake's epicenter. Four of the workers were able to escape the mine safely, but nineteen others remained trapped for about seven hours. Accompanied by rescue workers, fifteen of the workers emerged from the mine at 5:10 a.m. local time, followed by the four other miners a few minutes later. Their conditions were not immediately known, but none were seriously injured. Anxious relatives who gathered at the site erupted in cheers as they received the news that all their loved ones had been rescued, the Gazeta Wyborcza newspaper reported on its website. "What a relief! During those seven hours I smoked more cigarettes than ever before in my life," the father of one of the miners told the newspaper. Small earthquakes frequently rattle southwestern Poland, but they rarely surpass magnitude 4. The most recent earthquake of such a magnitude was a 4.5-magnitude earthquake which struck 67 kilometers (42 miles) west-northwest of Wroclaw in May 2011, causing no injuries. The country's strongest earthquake ever recorded was a magnitude-5.4 on December 31, 1999.

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