

Six officials sacked after gas disaster



A trapped miner is lifted from the shaft at the Jilingqiao colliery in Huangfengqiao Township, Youxian County, central China's Hunan Province, May 8, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

Six officials, including a deputy county chief, were sacked Monday after 18 miners died in a poisonous gas leak in a coal mine in central China's Hunan Province.

Rescuers confirmed the death toll Monday, after saving another 37 miners.

The accident happened on Sunday morning at the Jilingqiao Colliery in Youxian County.

Cai Yongheng, rescue team director, said rescuers had to carry oxygen tanks during the search.

Investigators are testing the makeup of the poisonous gas. Police have detained those allegedly responsible for the accident.

A miner who declined to be named said that after the mine manager was informed of the gas leak, he asked workers to enter the mine to rescue their colleagues.

Some of the rescue team, including the manager himself, were among those miners killed.

Another employee said a discontinued mine near the Jilinqiao Colliery had been discharging chemical waste gas, which may have triggered the fatal gas leak.

Local authorities placed responsibility for the accident on six officials, including the deputy county chief Wang Zhuowen, who were removed from their posts.