KATHMANDU, Three soldiers were killed in Nepal on Sunday when a landmine, laid by Maoist rebels, exploded, while government forces killed four rebels in an operation Saturday, media reports and the government said Monday.

On Sunday, a vehicle carrying the soldiers hit the land mine in Palpa district, about 200 kilometers southwest of Kathmandu, reports said. In addition to the three dead, one soldier was injured. The soldiers were reportedly on their way to patrol a telecom tower in the district.

On Saturday, government troops killed four Maoist rebels in a search operation in Ramechhap district, about 80 km east of the capital, the Defense Ministry said.

Maoist rebels have been fighting an armed rebellion since 1996 to topple the monarchy in the country. More than 10,000 people have been killed in the insurgency, according to government figures.

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