Colombo: An explosion in a northern Sri Lankan town killed two neighborhood guards and wounded two others on Thursday, the area's senior police officer said.

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The blast in the northern garrison town of Vavuniya struck the guards as they were returning home from night watch duty on bicycles, Senior Superintendent of Police Jagath Abeysirigunawardena said.

Two of them were found dead and two were wounded, he said.

The cause of the explosion was not immediately known.

"We don’t know whether it was a grenade or Claymore (anti-personnel) mine," the police superintendent said by the telephone.

The guards were returning to their homes on bicycles after night duty when the explosion occurred, Abeysirigunawardena said.

Vavuniya is about 210 kilometers (130 miles) north of the capital, Colombo, is the last government-held town before territory controlled by the Tamil Tiger rebels.

The Tigers have in the past targeted such neighborhood guards, who are villagers appointed to help police guard their communities.

The incident happened amid a swell in violence that killed 150 people, mostly government security forces, in April and pushed a four-year-old truce to its limits.

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