Nine killed in land mine explosion in eastern India

PATNA, India, March 11 - A land mine exploded on Saturday, killing eight police officers and their driver, police said.

The officers were on patrol duty when the vehicle they were traveling in hit the land mine in the Garhwa district in southern Bihar, police said. Police said they believed rebels of the outlawed People's War Group were responsible for the blast. The PWG is fighting to carve out a homeland for tribal communities in Bihar and three adjoining states. It accuses rich farm owners of exploiting poor laborers by denying them fair wages, seizing property and raping women. They allegedly target policemen who they believe back the rich against the poor.

Bihar's director general of police, K.A. Jacob, said he believed the attack was in retaliation for a gunbattle last week when 11 PWG activists were killed. A massive manhunt has been launched to nab the rebels and police have sealed the borders of the district to stop the attackers from fleeing, Jacob said.

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