Nine Russian Soldiers Killed in Landmine Attack (Chechnya)

Moscow (Russia) - Nine Russian soldiers were killed when their truck ran over a landmine and came under fire in an ambush by rebels in separatist Chechnya, news agencies said Sunday. Five more soldiers were injured in the attack on Saturday afternoon near the village of Borzoy, Itar Tass reported.

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Separate landmine blasts in Chechnya killed three other Russian soldiers earlier in the day.

The truck carrying 15 soldiers was sent to investigate a report of a landmine on a highway, Tass said. Some were killed when the mine exploded under the vehicle and others were shot dead in the ensuing ambush, it said.

[Very astute... sending a truck down a highway where landmines had been reported.]

A rapid reaction force was sent to repel the attackers, it said.

[Somewhat belatedly, it seems.]

The Kremlin is pushing ahead with a peace plan to end a decade of conflict in the mainly Muslim province. The plan began with a referendum in March and envisages local leadership elections in October.

But recent attacks blamed on Chechen rebels, including suicide bombing at an open air rock festival in Moscow last weekend, have undermined the plan and raised fears that the conflict is spilling on to the streets of the capital.

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