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**BELGIAN MINE BLAST VICTIMS FUNERAL SERVICE**

Positive developed: 70 meters = 230 ft

Hope for the coal miners trapped half a mile below ground for the last three days soared yesterday night with an official announcement that the air just above where they are trapped appears to be breathable.

Heavy fumes and difficult repairs slowed rescue workers and further cut chances of finding any of the 263 victims of the Belgian Mine disaster alive? The disaster struck on Wednesday last but it has been two days since any of the men trapped 1,025 meters underground at the Bois de Cazier coal mine have been recovered either dead or alive/ The number of bodies recovered still stood at nine and those brought out alive at six. The families of the 263 officially estimated to be still trapped in weather that turned to be chilly and rainy.

Yesterday King Baudouin accompanied by several members of his Government and the General Manager of the Mines Company visited the mine and talked to the stricken families still waiting outside the mine.

This morning, a day of National Mourning for Belgium, took place the National funerals of the miners who were recovered from the furnace down below, but in almost everybody's mind these were also the funerals of all the others still trapped. An immense crowd from all over Belgium had come to assist at the Funeral service, which was said in the small church of Marcinelle. The crowd was estimated over 100,000.

Rescue crews have come from France and Germany to help in the tragic work in a terrific heat to try and reach the furnace level where 263 men might still be alive/