

Aid Workers Killed by UXO Blast inside Apartment

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West Honiara, Solomon Islands Two foreign nationals have lost their lives in the Solomon Islands during a bomb blast last night at their apartment in Tasahe, West Honiara. According to police reports, the two, an Australian and a British citizen, were working for a non-government Norwegian aid agency **conducting a survey on UXO**.

The agency, Norwegian Peoples Aid, has identified them as Trent Lee and Stephen Atkinson. The blast occurred inside the men's rented home and was felt more than three miles away.

Residents inside the building called for help from emergency services. Several other UXO were found inside the apartment according to police inspector Clifford Tunuki. He said police were unaware that bombs were being brought back to a residential area and were "concerned that they decided to conduct disposal operations within a residential area."

One of the men reportedly died at the scene, while the other was confirmed dead later at the hospital. A statement from the Police Media Unit confirmed that officers of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) EOD team and Forensics Department were at the scene following the fatal bomb blast.

EOD officers rendered the area safe before the RSIPF Forensics and other investigators were allowed to access the scene. "We call on members of the public in the Tasahe area to please stay well away from the area of the incident and allow RSIPF officers to do their work as we investigate this tragic incident," Inspector Tunuki said.