

# We're thinking of you, 'Mars astronauts' tell Chilean miners

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Members of the Mars500 crew wave before being locked into the Mars500 isolation facility in Moscow in June 2010. Six men who are cut off from the rest of the world in an experiment to simulate a voyage to Mars have sent a message of support to Chile's trapped miners and urged them to "stay busy."

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"When you are in isolation you tend to feel closer to all the other people who are living, or who have lived, the same kind of experience," volunteer "astronaut" Romain Charles said in a diary entry released by the [European Space Agency](#) (ESA) in Paris on Friday.

"In particular, all our thoughts go to the 33 [miners](#) in Chile who are trapped beneath the ground. Their living conditions are really tough and I hope that our message... will reach them."

The six -- an Italian, three Russians and a Chinese in addition to Charles, a Frenchman -- were locked up in a 550-cubic-metre (19,400-cubic-foot) mock spaceship in a Moscow research institute on June 3.

The idea is to simulate the effects on humans of a 520-day mission to the Red Planet.

The crew has to survive on limited food rations and their only communication with the outside world is by [email](#), with a delay of up to 40 minutes.

Charles said he had sought counsel from submariners and other people experienced in living in [isolation](#).

This advice was offered to the miners: "Stay busy, be careful with your health and keep a normal day-night schedule."

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