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Deadly train collision plunges Greece into mourning



At least 42 people were killed when a train carrying more than 350 passengers collided with a freight train at the entrance of the Tempi Valley in north-central Greece, north of the city of Larissa.

Dozens of passengers were injured, with a handful hospitalized in intensive care units.

The two trains involved in the fatal collision were traveling on the same track for several kilometers before the collision occurred, according to media reports.

In the wake of the tragedy, the head of Greece's supreme court prosecutor's office ordered an urgent investigation into the reasons behind the deadly train collision.

The order, by high court prosecutor Isidoros Dogiakos, essentially means that lower levels of judicial inquiry are bypassed in favor of a higher-ranking prosecutor, which in this case is the head of the appellate prosecutor's office in Larissa.

In echoing the same sentiment, a government spokesman in Athens said a probe has commenced over “...how two trains ran on the same rail line in opposite directions for several kilometers.”

The number of first responders, paramedics, military personnel and equipment operators working at the accident site exceeded 500 by midday.

Condolences for the families of the victims and best wishes for the speedy of those injured poured in on Wednesday morning from around the world.

Condolences were also issued by several Orthodox Primates around the world, including by their Eminences, the Archbishops of America and Australia, Elpidophoros and Makarios, respectively.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis arrived at the disaster site just after noon, where in a brief statement he said, among others, that “...One thing I can guarantee. We’ll learn the causes of this tragedy and we’ll do everything in our power to prevent something like this from ever happening again.”

Earlier, the government declared a three-day period of mourning in the country.

In a Tweet on her official account, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stated that “...My thoughts are with the people of Greece after the terrible train accident that claimed so many lives last night near Larissa. The whole of Europe is mourning with you. I also wish for a speedy recovery for all the injured.”

Appalling scenes from the site of the tragedy were grimly recorded by Orthodoxia news agency (ope.gr) in the subsequent hours.

Ope.gr correspondent Eleni Gennitseftsi and photographer Rafael Georgiadis were among the first media professionals on the scene of the terrible accident, considered the worst in Greece’s rail history.