

## Greek train crash: At least 36 dead and 85 others injured after two trains collide

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Dozens have been killed after a passenger train collided at high speed with a freight train north of Athens just before midnight on Tuesday.

Sky News reports that two trains travelling from Athens to Thessaloniki collided head-on near the Vale of Tempe, with multiple carriage derailed and three bursting into flames. 36 people have died and 85 have been injured.

A statement on the Hellenic Train website says: “Hellenic Train expresses its deep sorrow for the tragic accident caused by the collision of two trains at Tempi at the height of Evangelismos.

“The staff of Hellenic Train, working from the first moment on the spot in full cooperation with the competent authorities, offers the maximum possible support to the families of the victims, the injured and all passengers.

“Hellenic Train is making available to the hospitals to which the accident victims have been transferred the blood bank set up by the company’s employees to cover immediate needs.

"The company, with a sense of responsibility, informs that its primary and exclusive concern at this time is the care and smooth completion of the evacuation operation."

Greek City Times reports that Kostas Karamanlis has announced his resignation as Minister of Infrastructure and Transport.

On the website, a statement by the Minister of Infrastructure and Transport Kostas Karamanlis, reads: "I have just returned from the scene of the railway tragedy in Tempi. The pain is unspeakable.

"It is a fact that we received the Greek railway in a state that does not suit the 21st century. In these 3.5 years, we made every effort to improve this reality. Unfortunately, these efforts were not enough to prevent such an accident. And this is very heavy for all of us and for me personally.

"When something so tragic happens, it is not possible to carry on as if it didn't happen. I have been in politics for a few years, but I consider it a necessary element of our democracy that the citizens of our country trust the political system. This is called political responsibility.

"For this reason, I am resigning from the position of Minister of Infrastructure and Transport. It is what I feel my duty to do as a minimal sign of respect to the memory of the people who left so unjustly and taking responsibility for the timeless mistakes of the Greek state and political system.

"From the bottom of my heart, I once again express my pain and support to the families of the victims."

Many people on board the passenger train were university students returning home after celebrating a national holiday over the long weekend. Sky News reports that according to the president of the Greek Railroad Workers Union, Yannis Nitsas, eight of those who died were rail employees, including the four drivers of the two trains.

An article on the BBC website, say the Greek prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who was surveying the wreckage on Wednesday, has vowed to get to the bottom of what happened and to ensure it never happens again.

A train crash survivor has described the scenes after the crash as "chaotic".

The man told reporters gathered at Thessaloniki station: "All I personally remember is feeling a very strong braking and suddenly, I see sparks and flames on the sides of the windows.

"And then a sudden stop. This made us all panic and we just wanted to get out as soon as possible so we tried to break the window glass.

"Some guys who were near windows, we broke them, we got out. It was a chaotic situation in front of us."

The Greek government has declared three days of national mourning, with flags flying at half-mast on all public buildings.

*Photo credit: Hellenic Red Cross*