

There was panic': Stationmaster arrested, transport minister resigns after Greek train wreck kills 43

The death toll rose to at least 43 and a railroad worker was arrested Wednesday after the fiery head-on collision of passenger and freight trains near the town of Tempe in northern Greece.

More than 80 people were injured, and the Greek government declared three days of national mourning.

Rail operator Hellenic Train said the passenger train was traveling from Athens to Thessaloniki, Greece's second-largest city and a popular tourist destination that describes itself as the "gateway to the Aegean Sea." The train carried more than 300 people, including many university students returning home from Carnival, a three-day national party that precedes the Christian season of Lent.

Multiple cars derailed and at least three burst into flames after the two trains ran into each other at high speed just before midnight Tuesday, authorities said.

Rescue crews spent hours combing through the wreckage, listening for the calls of survivors. Cranes were brought in to peel away layers of twisted, burned steel.

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