

Death toll in Warri-Itakpe train accident rises to four, 24 sustain injuries



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- ***482 passengers on board***
- ***Oberevworì mourns victims***
- ***House demands probe, seeks compensation***

The death toll in the Warri-Itakpe train service derailment near Agbor in Delta State has risen to four.

The dead included two adult females, one adult male, and one infant passenger. The 24 injured passengers had been evacuated to medical facilities in Agbor for treatment.

However, the **Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC)** clarified that Senator Ede Dafinone and former State Secretary to the Delta State Government, Patrick Government were not board.

The Managing Director of the NRC, Dr Kayode Opeifa, made the clarification in a statement yesterday in Lagos, according to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Transportation, Funsho Adebisi, in a statement, said 482 persons were on board, comprising 442 passengers, 40 crew members, security personnel, and service providers.

According to the statement, a staff member of the NRC suffered a traumatic limb injury.

He said four coaches capsized while one coach derailed, resulting in the accident.

The Ministry and NRC extended their condolences to the families of the deceased and prayed for the quick recovery of those injured.

The official added that the onboard manifest had been retrieved and would be made available upon request by the relevant authorities.

He also stated that efforts were ongoing to identify the injured and deceased for proper documentation.

He commended the Delta State government, emergency responders, security agencies, the NRC Mechanical Directorate, Special Rescue and Emergency Team, medical personnel, and the public for their efforts.

Delta State Governor Sheriff Oborevwori has mourned the victims of the accident.

Oborevwori in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Sir Festus Ahon, prayed for the speedy recovery of those receiving treatment from injuries.

The governor described the accident as heartbreaking and unfortunate, noting that the loss of lives was a painful tragedy for the affected families and the state at large.

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He assured residents that the state government had swiftly mobilised relevant authorities to the scene of the accident to provide assistance to victims and ensure an effective emergency response.

According to the statement, Oborevwo directed the Commissioner for Special Duties, along with the chairmen of Ika South and Ika Northeast local government areas, to move to the scene and coordinate the rescue.

He also commended security agencies for their prompt intervention, adding that the Commissioner of Police was also at the scene and had deployed adequate security personnel to safeguard passengers' luggage and other valuables in the train.

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The statement further said those who sustained injuries were evacuated to nearby hospitals for medical attention, other survivors without injuries were moved to town, while the remains of deceased victims were deposited in the mortuary.

Though Adebisi said as of the time of his statement, 24 serious injuries had been recorded, it was learnt the number had risen to 35.

Chairman, Ika Northeast Local Government, Monday Odigwe, said 13 victims were being treated at Central Hospital, Agbor, 12 at General Hospital, Owa-Oyibu, and 10 at General Hospital, Owa-Alero, thereby bringing the total to 35.

Odigwe also stated that officials had received assurances that efforts would be made to lift up the train yesterday.

Oborevwoi prayed for the repose of the souls of the dead and for the families to bear the loss.

He reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the welfare and safety of residents and assured that the government would continue to monitor the situation and provide support for those in the hospital.

The House of Representatives yesterday called for an investigation into the train accident.

Also, the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) has launched an investigation into the incident, it was learnt last night.

Bureau Director-General (DG) Alex Badeh Jnr, in the company of the NRC Managing Director, Kayode Opeifa, led the investigators to the scene of the train accident.

Report said the investigation would unravel the immediate and remote causes of the derailment and give appropriate recommendations on how to prevent similar future accident in the sub-sector.

The lawmakers' resolution followed a motion sponsored by Francis E. Waive, who drew the attention of lawmakers to the incident, describing it as unfortunate.

While commending the swift response of the Delta State government, emergency responders, security agencies, medical personnel and local residents who assisted in rescue operations, lawmakers stressed the need for stronger safety oversight and improved emergency preparedness across the railway system.

In a further resolution, lawmakers demanded adequate compensation for the affected passengers, including those injured, families of the deceased, and others who suffered losses or trauma as a result of the incident.

The House also mandated its Committee on Land Transport and the Committee on Legislative Compliance to monitor implementation of the resolution and report back within four weeks for further legislative action.

In honour of the victims, lawmakers observed a minute's silence, praying for the repose of the souls of those who lost their lives in the tragic accident and for the speedy recovery of the injured.

The lawmakers expressed concern that the Itakpe-Warri rail corridor, which serves thousands of commuters, traders and workers daily, has continued to face operational disruptions and safety concerns in recent times. They warned that repeated incidents on the route could undermine public confidence in rail transportation as a safe and reliable means of mass transit.

The House further observed that beyond the loss of lives, the incident had caused significant emotional distress and disruption to the lives of passengers, many of whom were travelling for business and personal engagements when the accident occurred.