

Spain

# Train Crash Driver Charged Provisionally

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SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA, Spain — The driver of a Spanish train that derailed at high speed killing 79 people was provisionally charged Sunday with multiple cases of negligent homicide.

A court statement said investigative magistrate Luis Alaez released Francisco Jose Garzon Amo without bail.

The statement said Garzon must appear in court once a week and is forbidden to leave Spain without permission.

Garzon was not sent to jail or required to post bail because none of the parties involved felt there was a risk of him fleeing or attempting to destroy evidence, the statement said.

It said the train driver's license had also been withdrawn.

Garzon was questioned for almost two hours at the court in Santiago de Compostela, the northwestern town near where the accident occurred.

Garzon was driving the train carrying 218 passenger in eight cars that hurtled far over the 80-kph (50-mph) speed limit into a high-risk curve on Wednesday evening, tumbling off the tracks and slamming into a concrete wall, with some of the cars catching fire.

The Spanish rail agency has said the brakes should have been applied four kilometers (2.5 miles) before the train hit the curve.

However, a local resident who rushed to the scene of the accident said in an interview broadcast Sunday that minutes after the crash Garzon had told him he had been going fast and couldn't brake.

The resident, Evaristo Iglesias, said he and another person accompanied the blood-soaked Garzon to flat ground where other injured people were being laid out, waiting for emergency services to arrive.

"He told us that he wanted to die," Iglesias told Antena 3 television. "He said he had needed to brake but couldn't," Iglesias said. He added that Garzon said "he had been going fast."

In its report about the accident, Antena 3 television showed a photograph of Iglesias in a pink shirt and cap helping to carry the driver after the train accident. The station also aired television footage of Iglesias working beside the wrecked train to help other survivors.

In the interview, Iglesias recalled Garzon's words, "I don't want to see this, I want to die," that's what he said repeatedly," said Iglesias. "I had to brake down to 80 and couldn't," Iglesias quoted the driver as

## Train was going too fast in deadly derailment

The 52-year-old engineer at the controls of the train that derailed July 24 has been arrested and accused of recklessly driving the train at twice the speed limit on the curve where the wreck occurred. Francisco Jose Garcon Amo is a 30-year veteran of the Spanish rail network, having worked 20 years as a machinist, and starting as a driver in 2000. A closer look at the accident:

### Alvia train, on Madrid to Ferrol line

Was carrying 218 passengers, four crew members with two engines and eight cars

Next-to-last car is largely destroyed

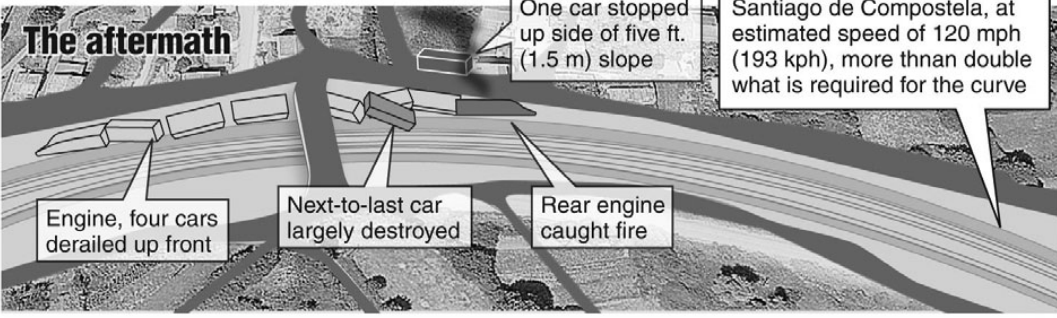
Rear engine burned after crash



- Maximum speed 150 mph (240 kph)
- Weight 390 tons (353 metric tons)
- Height 13 ft. (4 m)
- Width 9.5 ft. (2.9 m)

### Vicinity of the accident

At 8:40 p.m. local time, the train from Madrid bound for Ferrol derailed a few miles from the station of Santiago de Compostela



Source: AP, BBC, El Pais, La Vos de Galicia



### Deadly Spanish train accidents

- Death toll stands at 78
- Collision of express and commuter trains in Spain in 1972 killed up to 77 people
- 1944 crash of runaway train which hit two other trains was likely more deadly, but Spanish regime of the time covered up details

Alvia train from Madrid enters Grandeira curve, approaching Santiago de Compostela, at estimated speed of 120 mph (193 kph), more than double what is required for the curve

saying.

Iglesias was among the survivors and witnesses who began to give evidence to police on Sunday.

Investigators must determine if Garzon failed to apply the brakes or whether it was a technical failure.

Spain's state-run train company has described him as an experienced driver who knew the route well.

On Sunday, the death toll from the train derailment rose to 79 when an injured passenger died at University Hospital in Santiago de Compostela, officials said. She was identified as American Myrta Fariza of Houston, her family said in a

statement.

Fariza's friends and family had created a Facebook page while she was hospitalized titled "Hope for Myrta," where they collected donations and exchanged messages.

Officials said 70 people injured in the train accident remained hospitalized, 22 of them in critical condition.

Meanwhile, authorities said forensic experts have identified the last three bodies among the 79 dead.

Victims have been reported from Algeria, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, France, Italy, Mexico and the United States, but officials have not

publicly identified each victim or his or her nationality.

Mourning continued throughout Spain, with Sunday church services being held in remembrance of the dead. A large funeral mass is planned for Monday afternoon in Santiago de Compostela, and the prime minister and members of the royal family are expected to attend.

The crash has cast a pall over the town, a Catholic pilgrimage site. Santiago officials had been preparing for the religious feast of St. James of Compostela, Spain's patron saint, the day after the crash but canceled it and turned a local sporting arena into a morgue.

## Economy

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now helps run a fruit and vegetable stand with her boyfriend but it doesn't generate much income. They live mostly off government disability checks.

"If you do try to go apply for a job, they're not hiring people, and they're not paying that much to even go to work," she said. Children, she said, have "nothing better to do than to get on drugs."

While racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to live in poverty, race disparities in the poverty rate have narrowed substantially since the 1970s, census data show. Economic insecurity among whites also is more pervasive than is shown in the government's poverty data, engulfing more than 76 percent of white adults by the time they turn 60, according to a new economic gauge being published next year by the Oxford University Press.

The gauge defines "economic insecurity" as experiencing unemployment at some point in their working lives, or a year or more of reliance on government aid such as food stamps or income below 150 percent of the poverty line. Measured across all races, the risk of economic insecurity rises to 79 percent.

Marriage rates are in decline across all races, and the number of white mother-headed households living in poverty has risen to the level of black ones.

"It's time that America comes to understand that many of the nation's biggest disparities, from education and life expectancy to poverty, are increasingly due to economic class position," said William Julius Wilson, a Harvard professor who specializes in race and poverty. He noted that despite continuing economic difficulties, minorities have more optimism about the future after Obama's election, while struggling whites do not.

"There is the real possibility that white alienation will increase if steps are not taken to highlight and address inequality on a broad front," Wilson said.

Nationwide, the count of America's poor remains stuck at a record number: 46.2 million, or 15 percent of the population, due in part to lingering high unemployment following the recession. While poverty rates for blacks and Hispanics are nearly three times higher, by absolute numbers the predominant face of the poor is white.

More than 19 million whites fall below the poverty line of \$23,021 for a family of four, accounting for more than 41 percent of the nation's destitute, nearly double the number of poor blacks.

Sometimes termed "the invisible poor" by demographers, lower-income whites generally are dispersed in suburbs as well as small rural towns, where more than 60 percent of the poor are white. Concentrated in Appalachia in the East, they are numerous in the industrial Midwest and spread across America's heartland, from Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma up through the Great Plains.

Buchanan County, in southwest Virginia, is among the nation's most destitute based on median income, with poverty hovering at 24 percent. The county is mostly white, as are 99 percent of its poor.

More than 90 percent of Buchanan County's inhabitants are working-class whites who lack a college degree. Higher education long has been seen there as nonessential to land a job because well-paying mining and related jobs were once in plentiful supply. These days many residents get by on odd jobs and government checks.

Salyers' daughter, Renee Adams, 28, who grew up in the region, has two children. A jobless single mother, she relies on her live-in boyfriend's disability checks

to get by. Salyers says it was tough raising her own children as it is for her daughter now, and doesn't even try to speculate what awaits her grandchildren, ages 4 and 5.

Smoking a cigarette in front of the produce stand, Adams later expresses a wish that employers will look past her conviction a few years ago for distributing prescription painkillers, so she can get a job and have money to "buy the kids everything they need."

"It's pretty hard," she said. "Once the bills are paid, we might have \$10 to our name."

Census figures provide an official measure of poverty, but they're only a temporary snapshot that doesn't capture the makeup of those who cycle in and out of poverty at different points in their lives. They may be suburbanites, for example, or the working poor or the laid off.

In 2011 that snapshot showed 12.6 percent of adults in their prime working-age years of 25-60 lived in poverty. But measured in terms of a person's lifetime risk, a much higher number — 4 in 10 adults — falls into poverty for at least a year of their lives.

The risks of poverty also have been increasing in recent decades, particularly among people ages 35-55, coinciding with widening income inequality. For instance, people ages 35-45 had a 17 percent risk of encountering poverty during the 1969-1989 time period; that risk increased to 23 percent during the 1989-2009 period. For those ages 45-55, the risk of poverty jumped from 11.8 percent to 17.7 percent.

Higher recent rates of unemployment mean the lifetime risk of experiencing economic insecurity now runs even higher: 79 percent, or 4 in 5 adults, by the time they turn 60.

By race, nonwhites still have a higher risk of being economically insecure, at 90 percent. But compared with the official poverty rate,

some of the biggest jumps under the newer measure are among whites, with more than 76 percent enduring periods of joblessness, life on welfare or near-poverty.

By 2030, based on the current trend of widening income inequality, close to 85 percent of all working-age adults in the U.S. will experience bouts of economic insecurity.

"Poverty is no longer an issue of 'them', it's an issue of 'us'," says Mark Rank, a professor at Washington University in St. Louis who calculated the numbers. "Only when poverty is thought of as a mainstream event, rather than a fringe experience that just affects blacks and Hispanics, can we really begin to build broader support for programs that lift people in need."

The numbers come from Rank's analysis being published by the Oxford University Press. They are supplemented with interviews and figures provided to the AP by Tom Hirschl, a professor at Cornell University; John Iceland, a sociology professor at Penn State University; the University of New Hampshire's Carsey Institute; the Census Bureau; and the Population Reference Bureau.

Among the findings: —For the first time since 1975, the number of white single-mother households living in poverty with children surpassed or equaled black ones in the past decade, spurred by job losses and faster rates of out-of-wedlock births among whites. White single-mother families in poverty stood at nearly 1.5 million in 2011, comparable to the number for blacks. Hispanic single-mother families in poverty trailed at 1.2 million.

—Since 2000, the poverty rate among working-class whites has grown faster than among working-class nonwhites, rising 3 percentage points to 11 percent as the recession took a bigger toll among lower-wage workers. Still, poverty among working-class nonwhites remains higher, at 23 percent.

## Rescuers Say 37 Dead In Italy Bus Plunge

ROME (AP) — A tour bus filled with Italians returning home after an excursion plunged off a highway into a ravine in southern Italy on Sunday night after it had smashed into several cars that were slowed by heavy traffic, killing at least 37 people, said police and rescuers.

Flashing signs near Avellino, outside Naples, had warned of slowed traffic ahead along a stretch of the A16 autostrada, a major highway crossing southern Italy, before the crash occurred, said highway police and officials, speaking on state radio early Monday. They said the bus driver, for reasons not yet determined, appeared to have lost control of his vehicle.

Hours after the crash, firefighters said that they had extracted 37 bodies — most of the dead were found inside the mangled bus, which lay on its side, while a few of the victims were pulled out from underneath the wreckage, the Italian news agency ANSA said.

State radio said 11 people were hospitalized with injuries, two of them in very critical condition.

It was not immediately known if there were other survivors or any missing. Reports said as many as 49 people had been aboard the bus when it ripped through a guardrail after slamming into several cars, then plunged some 30 meters (100 feet) off the highway and into a ravine near a wooded area.

State radio quoted Avellino police as saying the bus driver was among the dead.

Occupants of cars which were hit by the bus stood on the highway near their vehicles. One car's rear was completely crumpled, while another was smashed on its side. It was not immediately known if anyone in those cars had been injured.

The highway links western and eastern Italy across the south, and first reports said the passengers had spent the day in Puglia, an area near the Adriatic on the east coast famed for religious shrines. But on Monday, a state radio reporter at the scene said authorities told him that the bus had been bringing the passengers home after an outing to a thermal spa near the town of Benevento, not far from Avellino.

demographic bloc of the working-age population. In 2012, Election Day exit polls conducted for the AP and the television networks showed working-class whites made up 36 percent of the electorate, even with a notable drop in white voter turnout.

Last November, Obama won the votes of just 36 percent of those noncollege whites, the worst performance of any Democratic nominee among that group since Republican Ronald Reagan's 1984 landslide victory over Walter Mondale.

Some Democratic analysts have urged renewed efforts to bring working-class whites into the political fold, calling them a potential "decisive swing voter group" if minority and youth turnout level off in future elections. "In 2016 GOP messaging will be far more focused on expressing concern for 'the middle class' and 'average Americans,'" Andrew Levison and Ruy Teixeira wrote recently in The New Republic.

"They don't trust big government, but it doesn't mean they want no government," says Republican pollster Ed Goetas, who agrees that working-class whites will remain an important electoral group. His research found that many of them would support anti-poverty programs if focused broadly on job training and infrastructure investment. This past week, Obama pledged anew to help manufacturers bring jobs back to America and to create jobs in the energy sectors of wind, solar and natural gas.

"They feel that politicians are giving attention to other people and not them," Goetas said.

AP Director of Polling Jennifer Agiesta, News Survey Specialist Dennis Junius and AP writer Debra McCown in Buchanan County, Va., contributed to this report.

Online:  
Census Bureau:  
<http://www.census.gov>