



NAVACELLE

Focus

A year of criminal justice: major criminal trials from July 2025 to July 2026

Navacelle looks back at the criminal trials held in France that made headlines for their legal, political, social, or criminal significance.

July 2026

The Lafarge case: First conviction of a French company for financing terrorist groups in Syria.

This trial of the Lafarge company and several of its former executives for financing terrorist groups in Syria has attracted international attention and sets an important precedent by demonstrating that providing financial support to criminal organisations in war zones can lead to prosecution.



Investigation

- A judicial inquiry was opened in 2016, following a **complaint lodged on 15 November 2016** by the organisations Sherpa, ECCHR and **11 former employees** of Lafarge Cement Syria (LCS).
- Regarding Lafarge SA's **continued operations in Syria in 2013 and 2014**, through a Syrian subsidiary, by paying several million euros to **jihadi groups** in the form of donations, taxes and tolls.



Trial

- November to December 2025, before the 16th Criminal Chamber of the Paris Judicial Court.
- Appearance of nine defendants, including the corporate entity LAFARGE SA, for offences relating to the financing of a terrorist enterprise.
- Appearance of five of them on charges of failing to comply with an international measure restricting economic and financial relations with foreign countries.



Sentencing

13 April 2026

Individuals (8 people):

- from 18 months to 7 years' imprisonment,
- record fines,
- including **former CEO Bruno Lafont**, who was sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment with **immediate incarceration** and the maximum statutory fine of €225,000.

Lafarge SA:

- maximum statutory fine of €1,125,000,
- customs fine of €4,570,000 (jointly and severally with four defendants),
- significant confiscation orders were made, although they did not reach the €30 million sought by the National Anti-Terrorism Prosecutor's Office (PNAT).



Upcoming legal proceedings

- Appeal.
- On 26 May 2026, release under judicial supervision of two former Lafarge group executives pending the appeal hearing.
- Ongoing judicial investigation into allegations of crimes against humanity.



Impacts

- **First conviction of a French company for terrorism financing offences.**
- **A landmark precedent regarding multinational corporate liability:** international significance due to the accountability of companies for their economic and financial management in war zones.
- Significant media coverage due to the immediate imprisonment of the two former executives.
- The case fuelled debate over the responsibility of companies that maintained economic relations with terrorist organisations, including the Islamic State group, at a time when it was planning or carrying out terrorist attacks in Europe.