



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

Trial of alleged DZ Mafia leaders: justice confronts the rise of organised drug crime in Marseille.

The trial of the alleged perpetrators of a double murder committed in 2019 in a hotel in the Bouches-du-Rhône department constitutes one of the first major criminal proceedings targeting individuals presented as central figures of the DZ Mafia, a criminal organisation associated with drug trafficking in Marseille.



Investigation

- On 30 August 2019, two men were found shot dead in a hotel near Marseille.
- A judicial investigation was subsequently opened into organised gang murders in order to identify both the perpetrators and any individuals suspected of having ordered the killings.
- Background: **rivalries within the drug trafficking network.**



Trial

- March to April 2026 – Special Criminal Court of Bouches-du-Rhône sitting in Aix-en-Provence.
- The trial was conducted under enhanced security measures owing to the profile of the defendants and the organised crime context of the case.
- Numerous incidents occurred during the hearings, with insults and verbal abuse emanating from the defendants' dock.



Sentencing

14 April 2026

- Zaineddine Ahamada, presented as the gunman, Gabriel Ory, regarded as a prominent figure within the DZ Mafia, and two individuals accused of having ordered the double murder were sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment.
- Adrien Faure, prosecuted as an accomplice to the shooter, was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment.
- One acquittal.



Upcoming legal proceedings

- The Prosecutor General's Office lodged an appeal both the convictions handed down and the acquittal. Gabriel Ory also expressed his intention to appeal his conviction.
- On 9 June 2026, Gabriel Ory was taken into police custody on suspicion of preparing violent acts and planning an escape.



Impacts

- **The case also carries symbolic significance insofar as it resulted in the conviction of alleged organisers and criminal leaders of the DZ Mafia, rather than merely those who carried out the killings.**
- **The murder was committed before the DZ Mafia had been established and revealed the rise to power of certain key figures in Marseille's drug-related organized crime.**
- **The incidents that occurred during the hearings sparked a debate over the balance between safeguarding defence rights, compliance with professional ethical standards and the proper conduct of organised crime trials, placing defence lawyers and judges at odds and leading to the opening of an ethics inquiry into the defendants' counsel.**