



PRESS RELEASE

Title: Paris Criminal Court Convicts Lafarge for Financing Terrorism in Syria in Landmark Decision Against a Company

Date: Paris, 13 April 2026

Today, the Paris Criminal Court found former executives and security managers of Lafarge SA and its Syrian branch Lafarge Cement Syria guilty of financing terrorism and the violation of international sanctions. This is the first time a French company has been convicted of financing terrorism.

Prison sentences range from 18 months to 7 years, with fines ranging from €20,000 to €225,000 (the maximum amount for these crimes) to be paid to the French State. The company itself, **Lafarge SA**, was sentenced to pay a fine of 1,125,000€, the maximum penalty for a legal person.

Bruno Lafont, former CEO, was sentenced to six years in prison and a fine of 225,000€ whereas **Christian Herrault**, former Director of operations for Syria, received a five-year prison sentence and a 225,000€ fine. Both were arrested today, immediately after the verdict.

Bruno Pescheux, Director of the Syrian subsidiary, Lafarge Cement Syria (LCS) received a five-year prison sentence, as well as a fine of 225,000€. **Frédéric Jolibois**, who replaced Pescheux in this role, was sentenced to three years in prison and fined 80,000€.

Ahmad Al-Jaloudi and **Jacob Waerness**, both Security Managers of the factory in Jalabiya were respectively sentenced to two years in prison plus a fine of 20,000€ and 18 months in prison with the same fine. Both were not present at the verdict, and arrest warrants have been issued against them.

Amro Taleb, who acted as intermediary between Lafarge and ISIL, received a three-year sentence and a 60,000€ fine. Absent at the verdict hearing, an arrest warrant was issued against him.

Finally, **Firas Tlass**, Syrian businessman and an intermediary between Lafarge and ISIL, was sentenced to seven years in prison, as well as a 225,000€ fine. Absent both at the trial and the verdict, an arrest warrant against him has been renewed.

Commenting on the verdict, Natia Navrouzov, Executive Director at Yazda, stated:

“Survivors often tell us that ISIL’s crimes were not committed by a group of individuals alone but were made possible by a broader system. Today’s decision against a company is a powerful recognition of that reality. It sends a clear message: economic actors cannot ignore the consequences of their actions when lives are at stake and when a genocide unfolds in proximity to their operations.”

Court's Findings

Throughout the six-week trial held from [4 November 2025](#) to [19 December 2025](#), the defendants argued that they were unaware of the terrorist nature of groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, and ISIL between 2012 and 2014, when payments totaling **\$5.5 million** were made. They denied any criminal intent, claiming the payments resulted from extortion or security constraints, without personal enrichment.

However, the Court rejected these arguments. It found that the executives **were aware of the terrorist nature of the groups** and that Lafarge demonstrated **deliberate indifference** in continuing its operations.

The presiding judge stated:

“They discussed, negotiated, and paid in order to continue their operations – even as the factory was surrounded by ISIL.”

The judge further recalled that:

*“On 3 August 2014, only fifteen kilometers from Syria’s border, ISIL began a **genocide against the Yazidi people**, with mass executions, forced displacement, and the enslavement of women and children.”*

Yazda’s lawyers Rachel Lindon and Louis Falgas commented:

“In the Court’s initial report of the Lafarge case in November last year, the Yazidi genocide was not mentioned. Today the Paris Criminal Court, upon convicting all the parties referred to it, described in detail the suffering of the Yazidi people at the hands of ISIL, sparing no detail as to the forced displacements, the summary executions, mass sexual enslavement and other acts of unfathomable violence endured. This ruling is a steppingstone for Yazda’s continued judicial advocacy.”

Role of Civil Society Organizations

Yazda acknowledges the essential role of [Sherpa](#) and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights ([ECCHR](#)), alongside former Syrian employees of Lafarge, in initiating the criminal complaint in 2016 and supporting victims throughout nearly a decade of proceedings. Their sustained efforts were instrumental in bringing this case before the French courts and advancing corporate accountability for serious international crimes. Despite their courage and central role in exposing the facts, the former Syrian employees were not admitted as civil parties; their fight for justice continues.

Yazda testified alongside these organizations and former employees. On 9 December 2025, Navrouzov [addressed](#) the court to urge that the genocide of the Yazidis be given the attention it requires, ensuring that Yazidi voices were heard and that the tribunal fully grasped the consequences of financing terrorist groups. She stressed that *“behind the figures, behind the negotiations to keep a factory running, there is the fate of a community. Financing a terrorist group is not a neutral act, it feeds a machine that kills, enslaves, and destroys.”*

The Court also declared Yazda’s civil party status admissible, recognizing the important role that organizations representing victims of terrorist groups play in the search for the truth.

Yazda's lawyer Luke Vidal commented:

"We are pleased that Yazda's civil party application has been declared admissible. This recognition is the culmination of its founding mission: to defend the rights of the Yazidi community whenever criminal proceedings are brought in connection with the genocide of which it was a victim."

Ongoing Proceedings

The defendants have 10 days to appeal the decision. If an appeal is filed, the case will be reviewed by a higher court, which may confirm, modify, or overturn the judgment. As such, the convictions and sentences are **not yet final**.

In parallel, the investigation into Lafarge's potential complicity in crimes against humanity remains ongoing. This separate judicial track, confirmed by French courts and still under investigation, could lead to a future trial, although **no timeline has been set for the closing of the investigation**.

Yazda is a civil party in these proceedings and will continue to actively support the investigation, with the expectation that this part of the case will also be brought to trial.

For Yazda and the survivors it represents, this phase is essential: it seeks to establish responsibility not only for financing terrorism, but for the broader system that enabled the commission of international crimes, including the genocide against the Yazidis and crimes against the Syrian civilians.

Read this Press Release in Arabic [here](#).

For media inquiries, please contact: info@yazda.org

Yazda is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that was established in 2014 in response to the genocide committed by the self-declared Islamic State (ISIS) against the Yazidis and other minorities in Iraq. Yazda manages a portfolio of humanitarian, justice, advocacy, and development-related projects, all of which are community and survivor-centered in terms of design and implementation. Since its inception, Yazda has been working with local and international partners to provide humanitarian, accountability, and advocacy services to vulnerable minority groups in Iraq in their post-genocide recovery. The organization has been operating in Iraq since October 2014 and has main offices in Duhok in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and a branch office in Sinjar in Nineveh Province. Yazda is registered as a non-profit organization in the United States, the United Kingdom, Iraq, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Since its creation, Yazda has received support from numerous donors, both institutional and individual, and has reached tens of thousands of direct and indirect beneficiaries through its programs and initiatives.