

# Brussels terror attacks trial: Eight found guilty of terror activities, six of murder, two acquitted

From the [Brussels Times](#) and the [London Evening Standard](#)

Eight of the ten defendants in the Brussels terror attacks trial were found guilty on Tuesday evening of participating in the activities of a terror group on 22 March 2016.

A series of bombings at Brussels Airport in Zaventem and at Maelbeek metro station on 22 March 2016 killed 35 people (including at least three people who succumbed to their injuries and trauma much later) and left more than 300 people severely injured. . . the deadliest attack in [Belgium](#) since the end of the Second World War.



The assize jury at the trial for these attacks found six of the eight, Mohamed Abrini, Osama Krayem, Salah Abdeslam, Ali El

Haddad Asufi, Bilal El Makhoukhi and Oussama Atar, guilty of

terrorist murder. Terrorist murder is punishable by life imprisonment, but the deliberation on sentencing will only take place in September.

The jury noted that it was beyond doubt that the attacks had a terrorist motive, adding that the attacks caused serious damage to Belgium:

While Sofien Ayari and Hervé Bayingana Muhirwa were found guilty of belonging to a terror group, unlike the others, they were not convicted of murder or attempted murder. The only defendants acquitted on all charges were the Farisi brothers, Smail and Ibrahim.

After lengthy deliberations, the 12-member jury recognised Oussama Atar as the head of the terrorist organisation behind the attacks. He had been tried in absentia as he is presumed to have died in Syria.

El Makhoukhi, not only provided essential assistance to the jihadist cell, but was also supposed to take over after the suicide attacks and the deaths of the main members of the group. The main element attributed to the 34-year-old Belgian-Moroccan is the recovery of the cell's weapons from the safe house on Rue Max Roos in Schaerbeek. El Makhoukhi has always refused to reveal to whom he entrusted them.

Abdeslam was found guilty of murder and attempted murder even though, as the defence pleaded, the Frenchman had been in prison on the day of the attacks. (He) is already serving a life sentence for his involvement in the 2015 Paris terror attacks which killed 130 people. He was arrested by police four days before the Brussels attacks. The jury noted that close links could be established between the building on Rue du Dries, where Abdeslam, Ayari and Belkaïd had been in hiding, and the safe house on Rue Max Roos, where Abrini, El Bakraoui and Laachraoui had stayed. The jury stressed that Abdeslam had decided to stay in Europe to "finish the work"

begun by the Paris attacks, recalling that, in a letter to Atar, he had referred to a belt of explosives that he had worn in Paris and asked to be “better equipped in future.”

The 12 jurors had been deliberating since early July over some 300 questions the court asked them to consider before reaching a verdict.

Jamila Adda, president of the Life4Bruxelles victims' association, gathered a group of survivors at the special courthouse to hear Tuesday's verdict. “We have been waiting for this for seven years, seven years that weighed heavily on the victims. ... We are waiting with impatience, and with some anguish” for the verdict, he said.

Sentencing will be decided in a separate process, not before September.