

## French Comedian Dieudonné Sentenced for “Condoning Terrorism” on Facebook

By [RT](#)

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*Amid a crackdown on hate speech and “condoning terrorism” online, a French court has handed out a two-month suspended prison sentence to prominent comedian and political activist Dieudonne over a Facebook post in the wake of Charlie Hebdo attack.*

The 49-year-old Dieudonne M’bala M’bala, or simply Dieudonne has been convicted for being “an apologist for terrorism” over a Facebook post he made following attacks in France that killed 17 people.

*“I feel like Charlie Coulibaly,”* he wrote in a coined phrase on Facebook on January 11, four days after the Charlie Hebdo attack, allegedly making a mockery of the slogan “*Je suis Charlie*” (I am Charlie) a global rallying cry against extremism. The second part of the phrase mimicked the name of Amedy Coulibaly, the gunman who killed four people at a Paris kosher supermarket.

Prosecutor Annabelle Philippe argued that Dieudonne is guilty of presenting “*in a favourable light the acts committed by Amedy Coulibaly.*”

“The feeling of hostility towards the Jewish community that Dieudonne kept up in front of a public attracted by his charisma increases his responsibility,” the court argued. The prosecution was seeking a harsher sentence of up to 7 years in prison and a potential 100,000 euro (\$106,000) fine.

Dieudonne, who was not present at court during the sentencing on Wednesday, was also fined €30,000 (\$35,000), which, if not paid, will result in a prison term.

According to French daily, 20minutes, Dieudonne argued in court on January 28 and February 4 that he has condemned the Charlie Hebdo attacks “*without restraint and without any ambiguity.*” Dieudonne also claimed at the hearing that he wished to participate in the march in Paris against the extremism, but the Interior Ministry had requested that he be “*excluded*” and treated as a “*terrorist.*”

The comic’s case was the most prominent case of several dozen investigated in France in connection to hate speech and allegations of “*condoning terrorism.*”

The comedian is known for his extreme right views and has been credited with inventing a hand gesture called the “*quenelle*,” interpreted by many as an inverted Nazi-like salute. He had previously been found guilty seven times for slander or anti-Semitic statements. A Paris court has also recently banned the sale of a DVD featuring Dieudonne on the grounds that it

is anti-Semitic, condones the Holocaust and “*collaboration with the enemy*”.

Amid fierce debates in France over whether the authorities are guilty of double standards on freedom of speech, France [blocked](#) five websites suspected of condoning terrorism and spreading hate speech earlier in March. It marked the first usage of new anti-terrorism powers approved by parliament last year that allow such bans without court orders.

France is still on high alert under Operation Sentinel which mobilized over 10,000 troops on French soil to protect 682 sensitive sites across the country including religious sites, railway stations, airports, and tourist attractions in the wake of a rise in religious tensions following the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January.

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