Gerard Depardieu Ordered to Stand Trial for Rape

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(FILES) French actor Gerard Depardieu arrives for his trial in which he is charged with sexually assaulting two women during a film shoot in 2021, at the Paris criminal court in the Tribunal de Paris courthouse, on March 26, 2025. An investigating judge has ordered the trial of 76-year-old French actor Gerard Depardieu in front of the Paris Criminal Court on charges of rape and sexual assault of actress Charlotte Arnould, AFP learned on September 2, 2025, from sources close to the case. Depardieu, who has acted in more than 200 films and television series, is the highest-profile figure caught up in France's response to the #MeToo movement. More than a dozen women have accused him of abuse. (Photo by Dimitar DILKOFF / AFP)  
  
A French investigating judge has ordered cinema icon Gerard Depardieu to stand trial on charges of raping and sexually assaulting actor Charlotte Arnould in 2018, legal sources said Tuesday, the latest chapter in the star’s downfall over his treatment of women.  
  
The decision, dated August 28, came after a Paris court handed Depardieu an 18-month suspended sentence in a separate case in May after convicting him of sexually assaulting two women on a film set in 2021.  
  
That conviction and a slew of other allegations in recent years have irrevocably tarnished the reputation of a man seen as the colossus of French cinema for the past half century.  
  
Depardieu has denied the charges of raping and sexually assaulting Arnould, saying his relationship with her was consensual.  
  
“Seven years later, seven years of horror and hell. I think I’m having trouble realising how huge this is. I’m relieved,” said Arnould, who filed the complaint in 2018.  
  
Her lawyer Carine Durrieu-Diebolt confirmed that Depardieu, 76, had been ordered to stand trial for the alleged assault and rape by digital penetration of Arnould in August 2018 on two occasions at his Paris home.  
  
“My client and I are relieved and confident. This is a form of judicial truth for Charlotte while she awaits the criminal trial,” she added.  
  
The trial would also be an opportunity to respond to “certain mendacious allegations in certain media” against her client, she said.  
  
The date of the trial has yet to be set.  
  
– ‘Clear and precise’ –  
  
Depardieu became a star in France from the 1980s with roles in “The Last Metro”, “Police” and “Cyrano de Bergerac”, before Peter Weir’s “Green Card” also made him a Hollywood celebrity.  
  
He later acted in global productions including Kenneth Branagh’s “Hamlet” and Ang Lee’s “Life of Pi”.  
  
Arnoult’s case was initially dismissed for insufficient evidence but she filed a complaint as a civil party, which led to the opening of a judicial investigation in the summer of 2020.  
  
Depardieu’s lawyer Jeremie Assous declined to comment when contacted by AFP.  
  
Depardieu denied the allegations in a 2023 letter to French daily Le Figaro, writing: “Never, ever, have I abused a woman.”  
  
“There was never any coercion, violence, or protest between us,” he said, referring to Arnould.  
  
But the investigating magistrate found that Arnould’s statements had been “clear and precise” and were corroborated by CCTV footage at Depardieu’s home, while the statements given by the celebrity had been “shifting”.  
  
The magistrate concluded that Depardieu had acted “in full knowledge of Charlotte Arnoult’s non-consent”, according to court documents seen by AFP.  
  
Arnould in late 2021 publicly accused Depardieu, a family friend, of raping her twice in August 2018 when she was 22 and anorexic. She said she weighed 37 kilos at the time.  
  
Depardieu, who has acted in more than 200 films and television series, is the highest-profile figure caught up in France’s response to the #MeToo movement.  
  
More than a dozen women have accused him of abuse.  
  
In May, a Paris court convicted him on charges of sexual assault during the filming in 2021 of “Les Volets Verts” (“The Green Shutters”) by director Jean Becker.  
  
The plaintiffs were a set dresser, 54, identified only as Amelie, and a 34-year-old assistant director, who accused the actor of sexual assault.  
  
He was also ordered to register as a sex offender. Depardieu has appealed the ruling.  
  
The actor has long courted controversy. In 2013 he received a Russian passport personally from President Vladimir Putin, though he has since criticised Moscow’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine.  
  
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