

Name: Alert ID: TMML2024031317243 The verdicts in the corruption trial of former global athletics chief Lamine Diack, his son and four others will be handed down in a Paris court on Wednesday. The older Diack, an 87-year-old Senegalese, who was in charge of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), now renamed World Athletics, between 1999 and 2015, is charged with "giving and receiving bribes", "breach of trust" and "organised money laundering". The prosecution alleged that Diack obtained \$1.5 million of Russian funds in exchange for the IAAF's anti-doping arm covering up or delaying offences by 23 Russians to allow them to compete in the 2012 London Olympics and the 2013 World Athletics Championships in Moscow. Prosecutors have called for Diack to serve four years in prison and be fined up to 500,000 euros (\$560,000). Diack told the court it was his decision to delay bans after the athletes failed tests in 2011, but he denied knowing that officials from the body had directly or indirectly asked those athletes for hundreds of thousands of euros to hush up their cases. He said he was acting to safeguard "the financial health of the IAAF" because the federation was negotiating major sponsorship contracts with Russian bank VTB and a Russian broadcaster at the time. Diack, who was decorated in the Kremlin in late 2011, denied taking Russian funds to finance the successful campaign by Macky Sall for the Senegal presidency. His son Papa Massata Diack, who worked as a marketing consultant to the IAAF, remains in Senegal, which refuses to extradite him. He has been tried in absentia on charges including corruption and money laundering. In a press conference in Senegal's capital Dakar on Monday, Papa Massata, who is 55, declared himself "innocent" and argued that the French court had no jurisdiction. He said he was not a French resident and that his companies are registered in his native Senegal. Senegalese authorities are conducting their own investigation and he is facing similar charges to the ones filed in France. Papa Massata accused British authorities of being behind the charges -- which he termed "the biggest lie in the history of world sport" -- in a bid to secure the IAAF presidency. Sebastian Coe, who took over from Lamine Diack, is British and a double Olympic gold medallist at 1,500 metres. - 'In the evening of his life' - The court has heard that World Athletics is claiming 41.2 million euros compensation from the Diacks for loss of sponsorship. Prosecutors are also seeking prison sentences for the former head of anti-doping at the IAAF, Gabriel Dolle, lawyer Habib Cisse who was Lamine Diack's advisor, as well as two Russian officials tried in their absence, the former president of the national athletics federation Valentin Balakhnitchiev and the former coach Alexei Melnikov. Diack gave often inaudible and confused testimony. One of his lawyers, William Bourdon, asked that the judges "do not take a decision that stops him from dying with dignity, surrounded by his loved ones, on his native land". The prosecution asked the court to punish a "huge breach of probity that has caused worldwide damage", even if Diack is "in the evening of his life". The verdict will not mark the end of the Diacks' dealings with the French justice system. The father, a former International Olympic Committee member, and son are subjects of a second investigation on suspicions of corruption in the allocation of the 2016 Olympics to Rio and the postponed 2020 Games to Tokyo. © 2020 AFP