

I made up child sex ring, says accuser

From Adam Sage in Paris

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THE trial of an alleged paedophile ring in northern France descended into chaos after the defendant whose evidence had put 17 people in the dock admitted that she had lied.

Myrian Delay, 37, broke down in tears as she said that she had invented details of a paedophile network said to include a priest, a bailiff, a taxi driver and a baker.

She said child abuse had been committed by herself and her partner together with a second couple, but not by the 13 other people in the dock. "It's true, I've broken families," she said. "They must take me for a madwoman."

As she retracted the evidence she had provided during questioning by Fabrice Burgaud, the investigating magistrate, there was uproar in the court in Saint Omer, near Calais in northern France.

Defendants screamed, their relatives shouted and lawyers denounced M Burgaud for failing to separate fact from fiction during his three-year inquiry in the supposed paedophile ring in nearby Outreau.

Aurelie Grenon, another defendant, who had backed Mme Delay's claims, also withdraw her evidence.

Mme Delay identified up to 50 people as participants in the alleged pedophile ring. But she told the court that M Burgaud had suggested all the names to her and she had confirmed them believing that she would be released on bail.

The trial continues on Monday.

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