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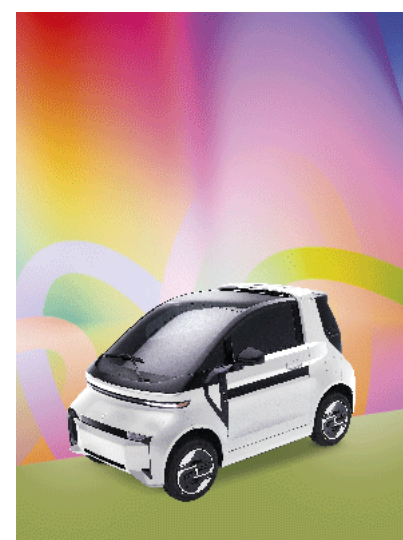
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29 years after JPK's disappearance, the judge closes her investigations



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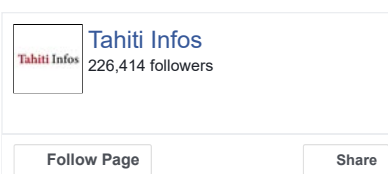
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30/07/2026

Death of Heirani Taruoura: two people in police custody

31/07/2026



Papeete, France, August 19, 2026. Investigating judge Mathilde Panici has sent a notice of the end of the judicial investigation in the case of JPK, nickname of opposition journalist Jean-Pascal Couraud, who disappeared in December 1997 in French Polynesia, AFP learned on Wednesday from the Papeete prosecutor's office and the civil parties.

Gaston Flosse, who was president of this overseas collectivity at the time, has been heard twice in recent weeks.

Aged 95, he said he did not remember the facts or denied elements that had been demonstrated by the investigation, according to minutes of hearings seen by AFP. On several occasions, the former strongman of Polynesia has accused James Lau, lawyer for JPK's family, of *"inventing everything"* or *"going off the rails"*.

"What is interesting is precisely what he does not say, what is evaded. This testimony was expected, because it was above the people we think were behind the crime," Lau told AFP.

Several leads have been suggested to explain the disappearance of Jean-Pascal Couraud, a journalist investigating corruption cases and a notorious opponent of Gaston Flosse, on the night of December 15 to 16, 1997 in Tahiti, at the age of 37.

First of all, that of suicide: he could have swam to the end of his breath before sinking.

But in 2004, Vetea Guilloux, a member of the Polynesian Intervention Group (GIP), considered a militia devoted to Gaston Flosse and dissolved in 2006, claims to have heard two colleagues recount the beating and then the immersion of JPK on the high seas.

Prosecuted for defamation in court, Vetea Guilloux had declared with trembling that he had lied. He has not wished to speak since.

The other hypothesis is sentimental: JPK's partner and her lover at the time of the events are suspected of having participated in his disappearance.

Jean-Pascal Couraud's family does not rule out the possibility that political and personal leads could be intertwined and the justice system has not ruled out either of them, since the two

members of the GIP accused by Vetea Guilloux, as well as their leader, have been indicted, as have the JPK's partner and her ex-lover.

One of the members of the GIP has died, but the other four people remain prosecuted. The members of the GIP are charged with kidnapping and sequestration followed by death, in an organized gang. JPK's partner and her ex-lover are accused of having voluntarily caused death.

Gaston Flosse was only heard as a witness. He assured that the members of the "GIP (were) not capable of killing anyone".

"Our hope is that it will be judged before the 30th anniversary of my brother's disappearance," Philippe Couraud told AFP.

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