

Caseload

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The court's caseload is dominated numerically by the Board of Appeal. The Criminal Chamber receives a few dozen indictments and other cases a year, but these include the longest and most complex trials of Swiss criminal justice. In 2025 the court received 686 cases and decided 638, and 326 cases were pending at the end of the year.¹ The table shows the development over three years.

Chamber	2023	received	2024	received	2025	received	Criminal Chamber
50	76	62	Board of Appeal	575	493	576	Appeals Chamber
52	50	48	Total	677	619	686	

Source: joint press releases of the federal courts of 18 March 2025 and 17 March 2026, and the court's annual reports (below).

The subject matter of the Criminal Chamber's cases reflects the federal jurisdiction described below. Of the cases it decided in 2025, 38 concerned offences under federal jurisdiction according to Article 23 CrimPC and 14 offences under Article 24 CrimPC, among them corruption, money laundering, organized crime and terrorist financing. Seven were requests for judicial assessment in administrative criminal law.² In the Board of Appeal, 285 decided cases concerned criminal procedure, among them 124 complaints, 83 conflicts of jurisdiction and 29 unsealing procedures, while 248 concerned international mutual assistance. Half of the Board's cases were decided within three months and three quarters within six months.³ The Criminal Chamber needed on average 260 days from indictment to judgment and the Appeals Chamber 358 days for an appeal.⁴

1 The Appeals Chamber and its difficulties

Until 2019 the judgments of the Criminal Chamber could be challenged only by an appeal in criminal matters to the Federal Supreme Court, which reviews the facts only for arbitrariness. Defendants convicted by a cantonal

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court had a full appeal on facts and law to a cantonal court of appeal under the CrimPC, while defendants convicted in Bellinzona did not. Parliament corrected this inequality by amending the StBOG on 17 March 2017 and creating the Appeals Chamber, which began its work on 1 January 2019.⁵ The legislator assumed that the new chamber would receive about eleven appeals a year. In 2025 it received 42 appeals and six requests for revision, almost four times the estimate. The number of pending cases rose to 35 or 36 at the end of the year despite the efforts of its judges and clerks.⁶

The court has described the situation of the Appeals Chamber as critical in successive annual reports. An audit report of September 2022 found chronic underfunding. In its report for 2025 the chamber stated that it had deliberately refrained from asking for more judges' posts because legislative effort seemed better spent on an organizational reform. The court was awaiting the decision of Parliament on a motion (25.4395) concerning that reorganization.⁷ At the twentieth anniversary of the court in October 2024, its president named the separation of the court's instances and the digitalization of justice as the main challenges for the future.⁸ The underlying problem is institutional. The Appeals Chamber reviews judgments of colleagues with whom its members share a building, a plenary court and an administration. Critics in Parliament and in the legal literature have pointed to the tensions inherent in this arrangement. In 2023 an internal working group of the court completed plans for a reorganization under the heading "separation of instances" (*Instanzenentrennung*). The Legal Affairs Committee of the Council of States examined the question at an extraordinary meeting in Bellinzona on 20 October 2025, concluded that the organization of the court should be reconsidered and took up the reorganization of the court's resources in Motion 25.4395. Pending the outcome, the Appeals Chamber has refrained from requesting additional judges, although a report of the Supervisory Committees of 20 September 2022 had already recorded a chronic shortage of resources.⁹

In figures. The Federal Criminal Court had 22 judges (19.3 full-time positions) in 2025, eleven German-speaking, eight French-speaking and three Italianspeaking, as well as 71 clerks and administrative staff.¹⁰ Its expenditure was CHF 19.72 million.¹¹ It received 686 cases in 2025, of which 62 went to the Criminal Chamber, 576 to the Board of Appeal and 48 to the Appeals Chamber.¹² The Board of Appeal decided 248 cases of international mutual assistance in 2025, including 52 extradition cases.¹³ The Appeals Chamber received almost four times the number of appeals assumed when it was created.¹⁴

2 Notes

1. Federal Supreme Court, Federal Criminal Court, Federal Administrative Court and Federal Patent Court, joint press release on the management reports 2025, 17 March 2026, https://www.bvger.ch/bvger/documents/geschaeftsberichte/2025/ge-meinsame_mm_gb_2025_it.pdf; Geschäftsbericht 2025 (above). ↩
2. Geschäftsbericht 2025 (above), statistics of the Criminal Chamber. ↩
3. Geschäftsbericht 2025 (above), statistics of the Board of Appeal. ↩
4. Geschäftsbericht 2025 (above), duration of proceedings. ↩
5. Federal Criminal Court, "Cronistoria" (above), entries for 17 March 2017 and 1 January 2019. On the earlier limited review by the Federal Supreme Court see BGG, Art. 97(1) and Art. 105. ↩
6. Geschäftsbericht 2025 (above), report of the Appeals Chamber. The report gives 35 and 36 pending cases in different tables. ↩
7. Geschäftsbericht 2025 (above); joint press release of 18 March 2025 on the management reports 2024, https://bvger.ch/media-releases/2025/gemeinsame_mm_gb_2024_it.pdf ("La situazione della Corte d'appello rimane critica"). ↩
8. Federal Criminal Court, press release of 18 October 2024 (above). ↩
9. Federal Criminal Court, Geschäftsbericht 2025, 17 March 2026, https://www.bstger.ch/uploads/2026-03-17_GB_2025_BStGer_d.pdf, pp. 47 and 49 (reorganization project "Instanzenentrennung"; meeting of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Council of States in Bellinzona on 20 October 2025; Motion 25.4395; report of the Supervisory Committees of 20 September 2022 on chronic under-resourcing). ↩
10. Geschäftsbericht 2025 (above). ↩
11. Geschäftsbericht 2025 (above). ↩
12. Joint press release of 17 March 2026 (above). ↩
13. Geschäftsbericht 2025 (above). ↩
14. Geschäftsbericht 2025 (above). ↩

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