

Greenpeace Copenhagen gatecrashers get wrists slapped

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COPENHAGEN, August 22, 2011 (AFP) - A Copenhagen court on Monday sentenced 11 Greenpeace activists to 14-day suspended prison terms for gatecrashing a royal gala dinner at the December 2009 United Nations climate conference.

The sentences were much lower than the up to 70 days requested by the public prosecutor along with banishment from Denmark for six years for the foreign members of the group.

The activists, from Britain, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States, were found guilty of falsifying documents and number plates but not of the rare charge of lese-majeste, or disturbing the peace of the monarch.

In its ruling, the court explained the low sentences by "the character of the circumstances on the one hand, and on the other, the fact that the transgressions were part of a peaceful political happening with the goal of causing debate," pointing out that "no particular serious rights were infringed upon."

On December 17, 2009, the head of Greenpeace Spain, Juan Lopez de Uralde, and Norwegian Nora Christiansen fooled the Danish parliament's security by showing up for a gala dinner hosted by Danish Queen Margrethe II in a limousine and clad in evening attire.

Another activist, Christian Schmutz of Switzerland, posed as their bodyguard.

Once inside they unfurled banners reading "Politicians Talk, Leaders ACT" at the entrance, amid arriving heads of state and government.

The court on Monday also found the Greenpeace Nordic wing guilty of organising the

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demonstration, fining the group 75,000 kroner (10,000 euros, \$15,000).