

Climate Change: COP15 Activists Facing Trials

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In December 2009 during the climate summit in Copenhagen, tens of thousands of protesters gathered to call for climate justice and challenge the ongoing UN negotiations. Instead of welcoming these popular calls for action, the Danish state responded with brutal police force and intense repression of protestors.

Around 2000 people were preemptively arrested at legal demonstrations, and were held in custody for up to 24 hours. Approximately 30 people were detained for up to a month, of which four people go to trial this autumn for more serious charges.

These people are accused by the state of planning violence against police, planning vandalism, and serious disturbance of public order. Some of these fabricated charges are drawn from the Danish terror package and the penalties are strengthened by the new Danish anti-protester ("hoodlum") laws introduced just prior to the COP 15. Although the charges they face are unfounded, they can potentially result in years of imprisonment. The first court cases against Natasha Verco and Noah Weiss are happening in Copenhagen on August 24th, 25th, and 31st.

The Danish based Climate Collective has called for international solidarity with the accused, both in Denmark and internationally to protest these false charges.

Laura Jørgensen from the Climate Collective explains: "Natasha and Noah, who are going to court in August, were both arrested almost before the summit started and are not accused of having participated in any of the demonstrations or actions. Still they are both charged with planning acts which neither the police nor the prosecutor can clarify what they are or when they should have taken place. Such accusations are completely impossible to defend yourself against." She continues: "The coming trials are not just about innocent people risking conviction, but a continuation of a system of massive repression that anyone who dares to speak out and organize against the powerful is met with by the state. It is clear that the state is trying to scare people from demonstrating and organizing themselves politically. The attempt to judge randomly selected individuals for an entire movement's collective actions is totally absurd and is clearly an attack on the right to protest and criticize the existing system. It is important that we don't give in to this criminalization and repression but continue the fight."

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