

Three French Anonymous on trial for targeting police officers

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Three French Anonymous activists went on trial Tuesday for hacking a police union website, collecting contact information for hundreds of police officers and disclosing the details online in 2012.

A prosecutor asked a Paris court to hand the three men, aged 22 to 27, a one-year suspended sentence and a 5,000 euro (5,500 dollar) fine each, a lawyer for the police officers, Daniel Merchat, told The Associated Press.

The three are also accused of breaking into two government sites and blocking public access for days.

The names, phone numbers, and personal and professional email addresses of 541 police officers who were members of the SGP-FO police union were posted online in January 2012 after a hacking attack claimed by the Anonymous organization, a loosely-associated international network of hackers.

The police officers are asking for 73,000 euros (80,400 dollars) in damages overall, another lawyer for one of the defendants, Matthieu Hy, told the AP.

The criminal court will deliver its ruling March 22.

Merchat told France Info radio "the contact information for these police officers is accessible to all people planning to target France".

After his arrest, one of the defendants told the police the hacking attack was carried out in retaliation to the arrests of several Anonymous activists by French police and the closure of the popular website Megaupload by the U.S. department of justice days earlier.

The shutdown of Megaupload, a platform that ran online storage and viewing services, led to so-called denial-of-service (DoS) attacks on a range of government, police and copyright organization websites by the Anonymous group, including the French attacks, according to court documents.

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