

U.S. judge to rule if arsons were terror

by UPI

EUGENE, Ore. - Legal arguments before a Eugene, Ore., judge began Tuesday on whether 10 environmentalists who confessed to arsons committed acts of terror.

The six men and four women were members either of the radical Earth Liberation Front or Animal Liberation Front, and were convicted of the fires in the U.S. Northwest that did as much as \$40 million in damage to various facilities, but caused no physical injuries.

Federal prosecutors will attempt to persuade U.S. District Judge Ann Aiken several of the defendants qualify as committing acts of domestic terror, which could add 20 years to each of their sentences, the Eugene Register Guard reported. It would also mean they serve sentences in the toughest federal prisons.

The group was rounded up under the country's largest-ever sweep of radical environmentalists code-named Operation Backfire.

Under federal law the sentence for each ultimately up to Aiken regardless of any plea bargains or even her own ruling on whether the crimes were acts of terror, the report said.

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