# Two British women given suspended sentences for pole dancing near Corfu’s historic palace



Two British women have received a six-month suspended sentence following a controversial pole dancing shoot near a historic landmark in Corfu, Greece. The incident gained notoriety in local media after a video of their performance went viral, leading to public outrage and legal repercussions. Each performer was fined €200 to cover court costs after being found guilty of violating archaeological law and degrading the area around the Old Palace of St. Michael and St. George, a site recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage location.

The women, who have expressed deep regret over their actions, claimed that they had not intended to offend either the Greek community or those back home in the UK. One of the women, speaking to local reporters after the court ruling, stated, “We feel sorry to everyone we offended and let down in Greece and back home.” This sentiment was echoed by her companions, who also apologised for the disturbance caused and articulated their appreciation for the judicial process. While three members of the group were acquitted, the incident has nonetheless become a flashpoint in discussions about cultural sensitivity and public behaviour in tourist hotspots.

The backdrop of this case is significant; the Palace of St. Michael and St. George, built in the early 19th century, served as the residence for the British Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands. Designed in the neoclassical style, this architectural gem has remained a point of cultural pride, making the dancers’ choice of venue particularly unfortunate in the eyes of local residents. Social media erupted with indignation following the performance, with many users venting their frustrations over the perceived disrespect towards a site steeped in history. One local commented, “The Corfu Palaces: they once hosted royals. Now, pole dancing,” reflecting the sentiment of many who believed that the performers neglected the site's sanctity.

This incident is not isolated; it follows a pattern of strict enforcement of public decency laws in tourist areas of Greece. In similar past cases, such as the 2003 arrest of 18-year-old Jemma-Anne Gunning in Rhodes for indecent exposure during a 'Miss Bottom 2003' contest, Greek authorities have shown a willingness to impose significant penalties on foreign tourists for lewd behaviour. Gunning's case, which resulted in an eight-month jail sentence that was later commuted upon payment of fines, illustrates the serious approach taken by local authorities to uphold cultural norms. The severity of the legal responses reflects the tensions that can arise between local customs and the sometimes reckless behaviour of tourists.

As the women face their suspended sentences, the controversy continues to ruminate within the Corfu community, with some voices rising in defence of the dancers’ intent. A social media user pointed out that “dancing is part of culture,” suggesting that the performance, while poorly judged in context, was nonetheless rooted in a broader tradition of expression. This divide highlights the complexities of cultural interactions in an increasingly globalised world, where the practices treasured in one community may clash with the values held dear in another.

Consequently, the case serves as a sobering reminder for tourists: actions, especially those perceived as disrespectful, can have unforeseen legal and cultural ramifications in foreign lands. It reveals not only the strength of local sentiment regarding heritage and public decency but also the necessity for visitors to approach cultural landmarks with sensitivity and respect.

As the debate ensues, the ongoing conversation around the incident may prove pivotal in shaping policies related to public behaviour in Greece's cherished historical sites, ensuring that the delicate balance between tourism and cultural preservation remains a priority for both visitors and local authorities.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14753135/Two-British-women-sentenced-pole-dancing-Corfu.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/faliraki-girl-jailed-7232650.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14753135/Two-British-women-sentenced-pole-dancing-Corfu.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/4189358/British-teenager-faces-prison-over-Faliraki-strip-contest.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/faliraki-girl-jailed-7232650.html), [[5]](https://www.irishtimes.com/news/britons-freed-after-fines-for-stripping-1.370319)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/faliraki-britons-released-from-jail-6971363.html), [[6]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/greece/1439290/British-teenager-faces-prison-over-Faliraki-strip-contest.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14753135/Two-British-women-sentenced-pole-dancing-Corfu.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/faliraki-girl-i-feel-so-ashamed-7229756.html)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14753135/Two-British-women-sentenced-pole-dancing-Corfu.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/faliraki-girl-jailed-7232650.html> - In 2012, an 18-year-old British woman, Jemma-Anne Gunning, was sentenced to eight months in jail for indecent exposure after participating in a 'Miss Bottom 2003' contest in Faliraki, Rhodes. The Greek authorities' crackdown on lewd behaviour among holidaymakers led to her arrest. Gunning's mother described her as a 'very sensible girl' and expressed shock over the incident. The case highlighted the strict enforcement of public decency laws in Greece's tourist areas.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/faliraki-britons-released-from-jail-6971363.html> - Following their arrest in Faliraki, two British women were released after paying fines. Jemma-Anne Gunning, 18, faced an eight-month jail sentence for indecent exposure after stripping in a bar. She was released after paying approximately £1,675. The incident underscored Greece's stringent laws against public indecency, especially in tourist spots like Faliraki.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/4189358/British-teenager-faces-prison-over-Faliraki-strip-contest.html> - In 2003, Jemma-Anne Gunning, an 18-year-old from Somerset, was sentenced to eight months in jail for indecent exposure in Faliraki, Rhodes. She had participated in a strip-type show deemed illegal by Greek authorities. Gunning apologised in court, stating she did not intend to offend Greek sensibilities. Her mother expressed surprise, describing her daughter as a 'very sensible girl'.
5. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/britons-freed-after-fines-for-stripping-1.370319> - Two British women, including Jemma-Anne Gunning, were released from jail in Faliraki after paying fines for indecent exposure. Gunning, 18, had stripped in a bar after winning a 'Miss Bottom 2003' contest. She was released after paying around €2,000. The incident highlighted Greece's strict enforcement of public decency laws in tourist areas.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/greece/1439290/British-teenager-faces-prison-over-Faliraki-strip-contest.html> - In 2003, 18-year-old Jemma-Anne Gunning from Somerset was sentenced to eight months in jail for indecent exposure in Faliraki, Rhodes. She had participated in a strip-type show deemed illegal by Greek authorities. Gunning apologised in court, stating she did not intend to offend Greek sensibilities. Her mother expressed surprise, describing her daughter as a 'very sensible girl'.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/faliraki-girl-i-feel-so-ashamed-7229756.html> - After being jailed for dancing topless in a Greek nightclub, 18-year-old Jemma Gunning expressed deep remorse. Released after her parents paid £1,500 to 'buy out' her sentence, she stated, 'I feel so ashamed.' Gunning had been arrested for indecent exposure following a 'Miss Bottom 2003' contest in Faliraki. Her mother described her as a 'very sensible girl' and expressed shock over the incident.