

999

SECURITY AND SAFETY FOR ALL

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PEAK OVER PEAK:
A TRIBUTE TO SHEIKH
ZAYED'S LEGACY

DON'T BE A ROAD BULLY:
KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE &
NEVER TAILGATE

**ABU DHABI
SPOTLIGHT**
HIDDEN
GEMS IN THE
CAPITAL



THERE'S NO WAY TO DODGE

THE LONG ARM OF THE UAE LAW

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| UAE | 5.000 | AED |
| KSA | 5.000 | SAR |
| Kuwait | 0.500 | DK |
| Bahrain | 0.500 | BD |
| Oman | 0.500 | OR |



IN THIS ISSUE: 999 DIVES INTO THE ILLEGAL TRADE OF KNOCK-OFFS & THE REASONS WHY PEOPLE GET RUN OVER IN THE UAE

THERE'S NO EASY WAY OUT

SOME CRIMINALS THINK THAT THEY CAN COMMIT A CRIME IN THE UAE, AND THEN RUN AWAY TO ANOTHER COUNTRY, TO ANOTHER JURISDICTION. BUT THE UAE HAS BLOCKED, SUCH ESCAPE ROUTES THROUGH EXTRADITION TREATIES AND COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT.

999 BRINGS YOU AN OVERVIEW

BY ORLANDO WILSON



The job of providing a safe, secure and stable environment in the UAE for its citizens, residents, and tourists is a very complex task. With over 200 nationalities in residence and millions of people passing through or visiting the country every year, police are always on their toes. Law enforcement here is constantly in touch with its international counterparts on active investigations and for intelligence sharing purposes.

These days, criminals commit a crime in one country and, within a short space of time, they can be on an airplane heading for another country. This can cause a lot of problems for law enforcement – not only does it get harder to locate them, but also, once the criminal has been tracked down, it may be complicated to liaise with the authorities of that country so that criminal is brought to book.

International reach

The UAE has state-of-the-art screening for those wishing to enter the country; that means known criminals and undesirables can be refused entry. Also, the information gathered while people are passing through UAE immigration gives law enforcement the tools to investigate and track down any visitor who commits a crime during their stay. The authorities here can find such a person anywhere in the world.

A good example was seen in January 2014 when an Asian employee of a Dubai-based trading company was murdered by a gang of four criminals and robbed of gold and diamonds worth millions of dirhams. The criminals were quickly identified, their movements traced, and it was determined that two of them had flown to Armenia. The Armenian authorities were alerted by the UAE police forces, and the criminals were arrested when they landed there. The stolen valuables were recovered.

As for international cooperation, the UAE locates, arrests, and extradites numerous international fugitives on a regular basis. In 2017, the United Kingdom thanked the UAE for its actions that led to the arrest and extradition of a serial sex offender who was arrested in Abu Dhabi. He had fled the UK, while awaiting trial for 19 child sex offences in 2015. On his return to the UK, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Also in 2017, the UAE has recently signed a joint extradition agreement with a South African country to combat international fraudsters and scammers. The cooperation between UAE law enforcement agencies and their international counterparts is continuous and constantly developing, with the aim of ensuring that criminals have nowhere to hide.

Personal experience

As a personal example, in 2012, the writer of this article tried to report a handgun stolen, after someone who was working for him failed to return it after they were dismissed. He strongly suspected that the gun had been sold and shipped into a North American country. The police department where the writer went to would not take the report, as they (name of the country withheld) claimed it was a civil dispute between his and his ex-employee and there was nothing they could do. In reality, they did not want to take the report, as it was a case that would be very difficult to solve and not worth their time and effort.

It is not only small-value assets that can be difficult to recover. Back in 2001, when he owned a private investigation company in Europe, he had a client who had lost £1.9 million (Dh9.5mn approx) in an investment deal with a professional fraudster there. This conman was a fugitive wanted by the US Marshal Service. At that time this country in Europe did not have extradition treaties with many other countries and the fraudster used his contacts in the police and the government to keep his pursuers at bay.

Professional fraudsters take their time to learn the international and local laws for the areas where they commit their crimes, and also where it is safe for them to hide, and where it is safe to stash their stolen assets. With the UAE signing extradition agreements with countries, it gives the UAE police forces the capability to catch those who loot from individuals and businesses within the UAE.

Domestic child abduction

One area where international laws become very foggy is domestic child



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PAUL-HENRI VIRGAL

Owner of French security and investigation company, ASP Bodyguard

abduction – this is where one parent can take a child away without the legal consent of the other parent. 999 spoke with Paul-Henri Virgal, owner of the French security and investigation company, ASP Bodyguard, who has consulted on such cases. When asked why people approached him as a private company owner, and what were the difficulties with such cases, he said, “The reason people come to us for help is because they become very frustrated with the legal system, which, in a case of parental abduction, is extremely complicated. A lot of the parents are desperate, as they’ve just had their child taken from them and face the reality of (maybe) never seeing them again. If they had custody of the child in France, for example, they should go to the police and make a report, and then it is up to the police to follow up on the case.

“The problem begins when the child has been taken to another country, which has its own rules and laws. The Hague Child Abduction Convention is the international law that tends to be used for child custody disputes, but how this is interpreted at local levels is another thing.”

“So what do these desperate parents want?” Virgal said, “Often, we’re asked to go and rescue the child, which we can’t do, because then in many cases, we could



be criminally charged with kidnapping the child in that country. We pity these parents, but we must work within the laws of the countries we are in – we don’t want to end up in jail ourselves. We have located the whereabouts of domestically abducted children in North Africa and Central Asia and with the intelligence we have provided, the families have perused legal means to recover their children. Depending on the location, we can sometimes try to use our connections to assist in the recovery, but it can be a legal minefield even for experienced local attorneys.

“It’s a sad way of looking at things, but when trying to recover abducted children or even assets, internationally it’s very much ‘Possession is nine-tenths of the law’. We tell our clients that it’s best to have security procedures in place to avoid any potential problems, but many do not

think that problems will happen to them. And then, they happen.”

It’s different in the UAE

Things are very different within the UAE, where the police take all crimes – big or small – seriously, and make every effort to bring the criminals to justice. Also, the legal system clearly defines which actions are classified as theft, embezzlement, or fraud. So, what would be dismissed by the police as a civil dispute can in many cases be a criminal offence under UAE law.

From a business owner’s and investor’s perspective, this creates a secure and stable environment where you know your assets are secure and any crimes against you will be taken seriously and pursued by the police.

As an example, in 2011, an Asian country extradited a British citizen to the UAE on charges that he embezzled Dh2.2mn (\$600,000) from a subsidiary of a multinational company in Dubai. The man was traced after he left the UAE in 2008; a warrant was issued for his arrest on charges of forgery and illegal possession of stolen funds. Even though he did his best to try and evade justice, he was located, extradited, and sentenced to 12 years in prison.

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Understanding the law

For expat residents, and those visiting to do business within the UAE, it makes good sense to review the local laws, so you understand how you are protected. Also, keep in mind that some business practices that may be acceptable in some countries are classed as criminal activity within the UAE – these will be pursued by the police, even if the person involved leaves the country. It is better to spend some time educating yourself on how to avoid problems rather than spending time, effort, and money to rectify a problem.

Even though the UAE police forces are extremely proactive in their pursuit of criminals, that does not mean that citizens, residents, and visitors should not take sensible security steps to protect their own cash and assets. For business owners, such things as properly vetting employees, making the maximum use of CCTV to cover high-value items, and monitoring workers' activities should be part of your regular operational plan. All businesses should compile a threat assessment and create a security plan to cover the prevention of theft and embezzlement.

Even at a personal level, you should keep receipts, photographs, and serial numbers of any high-value items or jewellery you own. That will make it easier for the police to identify your items and for you to prove ownership, in case of theft or loss. Your banking information, bank cards and cheque books need to be kept secure, so that funds cannot be stolen. If you think you have been a victim of identity theft or fraud, always inform the police with all the evidence you have. Even the smallest piece of information can be useful.

With the constant development of technology, international criminals are developing newer strategies and tactics to target their victims. Everyone needs to



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THE FALL OF A LOAN DODGER AND A THIEF IN THE UAE

A common scam in many places is for someone to take out a bank loan and then leave the country with no intention of paying it back. In the UAE, this is a serious crime. As mentioned in the November edition of **999** Magazine, one Bassam (name changed), an Asian expat, wanted to go back to his own country, but did not have the money. So he took a bank loan and sent the funds back to

his own country and left the UAE for good. But after a few months, the bank filed a police complaint, since the loan was not being paid off. The complaint went to the Interpol, via the UAE Ministry of Interior. One day, in Bassam's own country, officers of the Criminal Investigation Department located him and confronted him with the complaint of loan default. He confessed, and admitted that he had used the loan money to buy a house, a car, and to set up a shop in his own country. He was charged, tried, and ordered to settle the loan, which his family did by selling everything Bassam had, and then some more property. Bassam also faced a prison term. So the criminal gained nothing, and his family lost valuable assets.

Another example is from Abu Dhabi International Airport, where a Canadian woman had her high-end designer wristwatch stolen. Abu Dhabi police identified the suspect as an Asian man from CCTV footage at the airport. They traced the suspect to his home country and recovered the watch with the help of the local police. Brigadier Tariq Khalfan Al Ghool, Deputy Director of the Criminal Investigation Department at Abu Dhabi Police, who supervised the investigations, stated, "This incident proves that the UAE, especially Abu Dhabi, is a very safe place to live."

be aware of the threats. With credit card scams and identify theft being common crimes these days, everyone should take precautions to protect their personal information and privacy while online. Monitor your children's online activities and educate them to never to interact with strangers or give out personal information.

Make sure to do this before leaving the UAE

If you are leaving the UAE for any length of time, ensure simple things: your bank accounts are closed; loans are paid off; the lease is finished; utilities are all paid for;

the car is paid off or sold; traffic fines paid, and so on. Cancel your residence visa and finalise any formalities with your employer. These small steps can prevent future legal proceedings, embarrassment, expense, and inconvenience.

As the UAE continues to grow, it will attract international criminals and those seeking to make quick money through dishonest means. Unfortunately for the criminals, the police across this country have been working, training, and equipping themselves for many years to locate, pursue and arrest criminals and undesirables internationally.



About the writer: Orlando Wilson has worked in the security industry internationally for over 28 years. He is the chief consultant for Risks Inc. and based in Miami but spends much of his time travelling and providing a wide range of kidnapping prevention and tactical training services to private and government clients.