

# Cleric faces Dubai jail term for soliciting sex via BlackBerry

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Dubai: A cleric faces a year in jail after being convicted of sending indecent cellphone messages to several girls with the intent to seduce them.

The Dubai Court of First Instance convicted the Egyptian cleric, 35, of seducing women and urging girls to have sex with him by sending them messages on his BlackBerry phone.

Presiding Judge Fahmi Mounir Fahmi, who pronounced yesterday's judgment, said the accused, S.M., will be deported after the completion of his jail term.

Prosecutors had charged S.M. with persuading an unidentified number of women to have sex with him after communicating with them via BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) and forwarding indecent personal photos to them.

"I am not guilty. I did not do any such thing. It never happened," S.M. argued before the court.

He was additionally charged with possessing indecent photos with the intention to show them to others.

## Testimony

An Emirati first lieutenant testified: "We were alerted that S.M. used to add women on his BBM, then lure them to sleep with him ... We assigned a policeman to pose as a girl and coordinate with the defendant in order to have him arrested in a sting operation.

"He sent the policeman [who posed as a girl] an indecent photo of himself. Upon arresting him, we confiscated a sex toy in his possession," the first lieutenant told prosecutors.

The court's verdict remains subject to appeal within 15 days.