

Football fans fined for stunt driving after team's win

Charged with endangering life due to reckless behaviour during a parade to celebrate Al Wasl Club's victory

- By Bassam Za' za', Senior Reporter
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Dubai: Two motorists have been fined Dh1,000 each for endangering lives by driving in a reckless manner, during a parade to celebrate Al Wasl Football Club's victory at the Gulf Clubs' Championship.

The Dubai Misdemeanours Court Wednesday convicted the Emirati drivers, a 25-year-old sergeant and a 20-year-old employee, of reckless driving and performing stunts along Shaikh Zayed Road while intentionally endangering the lives of others on the highway.

Presiding Judge Omar Ahmad Abdul Baki, who pronounced yesterday's judgment in courtroom 11, fined 25-year-old S.S. and 20-year-old S.G. Dh1,000 each.

"On May 1, it was announced in the media that Al Wasl Club fans was organising [a] celebratory parade after clinching the Gulf Clubs' title... the parade started from the Club and headed towards Shaikh Zayed Road. The parade was held under Dubai Police's supervision. My clients [S.S. and S.G.] were surprised when the traffic police fined S.S. Dh1,000 and S.G. Dh2,400 for stunt-driving and booked their cars. Three weeks later, Dubai Public Prosecution referred my clients to court! How can a suspect be punished for the same crime twice?" advocate Saeed Al Ghailani said when he defended the two Emiratis.

According to the chargesheet, prosecutors said the sergeant and the employee drove their sports utility vehicles (SUV) dangerously along Shaikh Zayed Road and endangered the lives of others. They were likely charged with stunt and reckless driving as well.

The defendants admitted during prosecution questioning that they drove their SUVs on two side tyres along Shaikh Zayed Road but they maintained that they didn't have any criminal intentions.

Prosecutors asked the Misdemeanours Court to punish S.S. and S.G. according to the Federal Penal Code's article 348 which stipulates that a suspect who endangers the life of others could face a Dh100-Dh30,000 fine and/or one month-three years in jail.

"My clients willingly paid the fines and surrendered their cars for booking... three weeks later, they were summoned by Dubai prosecutors who charged them and referred [them] to court.

"According to police records, the incident happened while Al Wasl Club fans were celebrating their club's victorious achievement. During the parade, all the participants were in the mood to celebrate... my clients were surprised and didn't understand why law enforcement officers singled them out from amongst all who celebrated the victory.

"To say the least, a suspect cannot be punished or penalised twice for the same offence," Al Ghailani contended before Presiding Judge Abdul Baki.

The advocate asked the court to dismiss the case 'because his clients had already been punished'.

Al Wasl Club fans were in a celebratory mood following the championship and 'a person who is in a parading mood cannot get hold himself', Al Ghailani said.

"The charges were baseless and groundless... they didn't endanger anybody's life. Needless to say that no one complained that his/her life was endangered.

"Eventually, no one complained against S.S. or S.G. The police had allowed them to perform stunt drives especially since the parade area was cordoned off by police cars. The defendants didn't have any criminal intention or motive," Al Ghailani said.

The advocate asked the court to dismiss the case and acquit his clients or grant them a lenient punishment.

Wednesday's judgment remains subject to appeal within 15 days.

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