

Former airlines employee gets one-year jail, Dh60,000 fine

Convicted of fraud and embezzling 2.6m Skyward Miles.

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Dubai: A former Emirates airlines staff faces a year in jail after a court convicted him of committing electronic fraud and embezzling 2.6 million Skyward Miles as airline tickets for himself.

The Dubai Court of First Instance yesterday convicted the 35-year-old Kenyan, a former client services officer of Emirates airline, of electronic fraud and creating bogus accounts before transferring 2.6 million Skyward Miles to airline tickets [worth Dh60,000] and re-transferring them into his account.

Presiding Judge Al Saeed Mohammad Barghout fined E.O. Dh60,000. He will be deported after the completion of his jail term.

"That's right, yes, I am guilty... I committed that mistake and I regret it," E.O. said when he appeared in court.

Prosecutors accused the Kenyan of abusing his public office and embezzling nearly Dh60,000 worth of tickets. He was charged with committing e-fraud by abusing the Skyward Miles system and creating 2,000 bogus accounts [for real passengers] before transferring their air-miles to his account while issuing the tickets. E.O.'s wife, D.A. [who works as a travel agent], was accused of aiding and abetting him.

"It is true... I am guilty. But my wife has nothing to do with this case and she did not know," E.O. contended before Presiding Judge Barghout. The court acquitted his 33-year-old wife, D.A.

An Iranian safety officer testified the incident was discovered soon after a British woman sought to open a Skyward Miles account with Emirates airlines.

Prosecution records revealed that the suspect had transferred the air-miles to free tickets which he used to travel to and from Nairobi.

The judgment is subject to appeal within 15 days.