

Lawyer says unlicensed client couldn't have driven assassins of Chechen leader

A lawyer told a court that a suspected clerk played no role in Yamadayev murder

- By Bassam Za'za', Senior Reporter
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Dubai: A lawyer told a court on Tuesday that his client could not have participated in the assassination of Chechen leader Sulim Yamadayev "because he doesn't have a driving licence or a car registered in his name."

"Prosecutors claimed that my client, M.T., rented a car and monitored the victim for a period of time prior to the murder... Your honour, M.T, does not know how to drive. He doesn't have a driving licence or a car registered in his name," M.T.'s advocate Abdullah Al Madani told the Appeals Court's Presiding Judge Mustafa Al Shennawi.

"We ask the Appeals Court to contact the traffic authorities in Dubai to confirm whether M.T. has a driving licence or had a car registered or rented in his name at the time of the incident."

M.T., an Iranian clerk, and M.K., a Tajik businessman, were last year slapped with life jail terms by the Dubai Court of First Instance for their role in Yamadayev's assassination. They will be deported after serving their terms.

Initial verdict

M.T. and M.K. were found guilty of collaborating in the Chechen leader's assassination.

Prosecutors had charged M.T. and M.K., both 37, with aiding and abetting four fugitives who gunned down Yamadayev in the parking lot of his Jumeirah Beach Residence (JBR) home in March, 2009.

M.T. pleaded not guilty and denied any involvement on his part in the incident.

M.K. also pleaded not guilty and strongly denied playing a part in the premeditated murder and dropping the assassins at the airport as they made their escape.

His lawyer asked Presiding Judge Al Shennawi to adjourn the case so he could present his closing argument.

"I did not do all this," M.K. said.

The Court of First Instance confiscated the murder weapon.

Earlier, lawyers defending M.T. and M.K. told the court that their clients were innocent and that the evidence submitted against them was "groundless and uncorroborated."

According to the chargesheet, M.T. aided an escapee, identified as Adam, to monitor Yamadayev and follow him from airport to his residence.

Adam handed the murder weapon to M.T., who in his turn carried it to the fugitive suspects who used it to kill Yamadayev.

Prosecutors charged M.T. with carrying an unlicensed gun and bullets. The Tajik was charged with conspiring with the escapees in plotting the murder and dropping the shooters at the airport to escape. The court reconvenes on July 6.

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