

Canadian businessman without valid visa stranded at UAE airport

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Abu Dhabi: The deterioration of relations between Canada and the UAE has had deeper impacts on businessmen and Canadians wanting to visit the UAE.

Darius Mosun, a Canadian businessman, was held at Abu Dhabi airport due to confusion over the validity of his visit visa.

He had entered the UAE the previous week, then left for a short visit to Saudi Arabia. The UAE authorities then refused to allow him to re-enter the country explaining that his visa was a single entry visa and re-entry would require a new one as per immigration rules.

Mosun on Friday told the Canadian newspaper The Globe and Mail that “Canada must patch up relations because the dispute has created roadblocks for conducting business in the UAE”.

“The Government of Canada was formally informed of the new rule for visa requirements for Canadians entering the UAE. This new rule was made effective beginning January 2011,” Major General Nasser Al Awadi Al Menhali, assistant undersecretary of naturalisation, residency and exit affairs, told Gulf News.

“All Canadians, including this businessman, should have been aware of this law. In fact, he himself had just entered the country the previous week with the proper paperwork. We attempted to find a solution, but we abide by the laws of our nation,” Major General Al Menhali said.

Reciprocity

In 2010, the UAE decided to pursue visa reciprocity with Canadians citizens entering the UAE.

“Canada is no longer one of 33 countries [whose citizens are] granted entry visas at the [UAE] airport. Canadian citizens should obtain visas in their home country prior to travel to the UAE,” Major General Al Menhali said.

Canadians are unhappy with the impact of this law on their personal and business lives. Rawan, a Canadian student whose parents are expatriates in the UAE, will no longer have the same liberty to visit her parents. She must now spend up to \$1,000 (Dh3,670) for each

visa application to see her family.

“I could not be with my family during school break because I could not afford the visa fees,” Rawan said.

“I am held up in Cairo waiting for my visa for over a week,” said Waleed, a Canadian businessman enroute to the UAE via Cairo.

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