

Detainee faces three months in police cell arson case

He is charged with destroying property and endangering lives of others

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Dubai: A detainee faces three months in jail for eating pieces of glass in a suicide attempt and deliberately setting Al Qusais Police Station's lock-up on fire.

Prosecutors had charged the 21-year-old Emirati detainee with arson, destroying police property and trying to kill himself out of emotional stress and endangering lives of other detainees.

The Dubai Court of First Instance's Presiding Judge Hamad Abdul Latif Abdul Jawad yesterday sentenced M.M. to three months in jail.

When the accused appeared in court earlier, he pleaded not guilty.

According to the charge sheet, prosecutors charged M.M. with life endangerment of detainees in the detention centre after he deliberately set three blankets on fire. He was also charged with swallowing pieces of glass in an attempt to kill himself. Prosecutors said the damaged blankets cost Dh150.

Records said paramedic teams rushed to the scene and saved M.M.'s life.

A Somali police corporal testified that the incident happened after his supervisor alerted him about the fire.

"I rushed ahead with my colleague and saw smoke ... out from a number of blankets which had been set on fire," he stated.

He said he grabbed the fire extinguisher and attempted to put out the fire.

"Immediately we vacated the lock-ups so that none of the detainees would suffocate. Then we summoned the police and civil defence who put out the fire... preliminary investigations unveiled that the fire started in M.M.'s cell," alleged the corporal in his prosecution statement.

Wrists bleeding

The corporal, who questioned the suspect, testified: "While questioning him, I recognised that both of his hands were bleeding from the wrist."

He said the accused claimed he cut his wrists with a razor because he wanted to end his life. He alleged that M.M. claimed he was fed up and suffering mental stress and that pushed him to attempt to end his life.

The corporal continued: "The defendant also claimed during questioning that he collected the blankets and set them on fire because he had been placed in solitary confinement. He alleged that he had been treated unjustly and unfairly and for no reason. And that's why he tried to kill himself, according to his statement".

Prosecution records quoted M.M. admitting that he tried to kill himself and endangered the lives of other detainees.

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

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