

Dubai's first female judge delighted with court debut

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Dubai: Dubai's first female judge, Ebtisam Ali Rashid Al Bedwawi, said her first appearance in criminal court proceedings was not only challenging but also a source of pride.

Ebtisam said her appearance as part of the Dubai Criminal Court of First Instance's three-judge panel was overwhelming. However, she said it was less stressful than it had been described earlier.

"Honestly, it was an ordinary appearance... I didn't feel afraid or hesitant. This appearance is part of my participation and experiencing [of] criminal court proceedings.

"I will be attending as a left-side judge amongst the three-judge panel for one month. The Dubai Courts management informed me last week that I'll be participating in the Court of First Instance. I am interested in learning about criminal court procedures and litigation," she added.

Ebtisam, 27, became the first Emirati female judge in the Dubai Courts Department. She was sworn in before His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, in March.

Speaking about her first appearance in the criminal court, she said she felt happy at how things had progressed.

"The court proceedings and flow of cases was ordinary and it was less stressful than others described to me. Being the first woman judge in Dubai is an honourable thing and it is a source of pride to me as well," she said.

Judge Fahmi Mounir who presided over the hearing, said: "This is my first experience to preside [over] a panel that includes a female Emirati judge... it's nice and ordinary. However, I don't believe there is any differentiation between a male or female judge because in the justice system there is no preference between sexes."

His deputy, Judge Dr Ali Al Galadari described the experience as "glowing and honourable."

"Women judges should have experience in all jurisdictions," he said.