

Extradition plea baseless, businessman's lawyer says

Dubai Public Prosecution (DPP) referred the 45-year-old Russian, A.K., to Dubai Appeals Court after the Russian authorities put out an arrest warrant and an extradition request against his name.

- By Bassam Za'za', Senior Reporter
- Published: 00:00 February 14, 2010



Dubai: A businessman wanted by the Russian government for allegedly trading in weapons and explosives and a prominent business figure's premeditated murder in Saint Petersburg is contesting an extradition plea in a Dubai court.

Dubai Public Prosecution (DPP) referred the 45-year-old Russian, A.K., to Dubai Appeals Court after the Russian authorities put out an arrest warrant and an extradition request against his name.

A.K.'s lawyer Nasser Hashim, of Al Kamaly Advocates and Legal Consultants, asked the Appeals Court to reject the extradition plea, which he termed as "baseless and groundless".

A.K. was arrested at Dubai International Airport and referred to DPP in connection with the allegations of unlawful acquisition, possession, transportation and trading of firearms and ammunition and the premeditated murder of a well known Russian businessman, P.A.

"My client was detained for nearly 15 days before Dubai prosecutors bailed him out. A.K. is not wanted for questioning by the Russian authorities and has not been handed out an irrevocable criminal ruling," contended Hashim.

"The Russian authorities based their extradition plea upon a recent judgment handed out against other convicts [excluding my client] in the Saint Petersburg murder, in which A.K. was not involved, charged or indicted. The premeditated murder's verdict became irrevocable and other convicts are serving their punishments. He has not been subpoenaed or sentenced in absentia, which makes the extradition plea groundless and unlawful," he added.

Mafia hand alleged

The charges of trading in arms and ammunition and murder brought against A.K. remain uncorroborated and the extradition plea being examined by the Appeals Court is therefore unjustifiable, argued the lawyer.

When prosecutors levelled the charges against him, A.K. said: "The victim was one of my closest friends. When he was killed, I handed his family an amount of money which he had kept with me. I have been maliciously dragged into this case because I refused to pay that money to the mafia. I am not guilty and not involved in the murder. I refuse to be extradited to the Russian authorities as well."

A.K. pleaded not guilty to the charges in the Appeals Court and called on the jury to reject the extradition plea.

Hashim argued in court: "The Russian authorities' request to extradite A.K. is not related to any punishable or incriminated action he committed, but it's related to disputes between Russian businessmen. The Russian authorities did not base their extradition plea on any legal grounds... besides, we are concerned about his rights which are protected and preserved by the Criminal Procedures Law."

The defence lawyer also described the law enforcement procedures which were carried out against his client as "illegal".

"The prosecutor, who questioned A.K. tried to frame my client and charge him although the case lacks any corroborated evidence. My client is a well-known businessman and has many investments in the UAE and other Arab countries. We fear that he might fall victim of Russian businessmen's disputes in Russia. We ask the jury to reject the extradition plea because A.K. could be subject to abuse or torture in case he gets extradited. His rights and safety should be and are protected by law," contended Hashim.

The hearing into the extradition plea continues.

© Gulf News 2010