

# Illegal apartment partitions to be demolished

The municipality made this announcement through local media and set a deadline of February 14, 2010 as the last date for tenants and landlords to fall in line with the building regulation.

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- Published: 00:00 February 8, 2010



Dubai: Illegal partitions and constructions in residences and buildings will be demolished and they will face a cut in utility services said Dubai Municipality on Sunday.

The municipality made this announcement through local media and set a deadline of February 14, 2010 as the last date for tenants and landlords to fall in line with the building regulation.

The municipality called upon landlords and tenants who are violating building rules such as overcrowding apartments with families and bachelors to show active participation in community partnership in its effort to keep Dubai free of building violations and unplanned growth.

Once the February 14 deadline expires, the municipality will cut utility services to these buildings and the residences and demolish or remove any irregularities.

The other main objective for the enforcement of the rule is the safety and security of the public and environment.

The campaign on illegal constructions was first initiated in 2004 by the municipality and it has been since running in phases. In 2008 the municipality had notified the building owners and real estate companies not to rent out these premises to bachelors and had warned that failing to comply would see disconnection of all utility services.

Fines were not restricted to landlords but were extended to tenants who fail to comply with the regulations.

*Gulf News* in an earlier report had revealed how illegal real estate agents have also been instrumental in overcrowding buildings and villas. They divide the rooms with wooden partitions and then sublet to families and bachelors in order to make a lucrative business. Tenants were provided with handwritten rent receipts instead of a proper contract.

Meanwhile, tenants who live in sharing accommodation in buildings and villas said that they will turn to their landlords who have taken money for them for the accommodation.

The majority of those living in sharing flats and villas are bachelors and families who belong to the low income group.

Mazhar Khan, a Pakistani, said that he was forced to share a one-bedroom flat after he lost his job a couple of months back. He used to earn Dh8,500 per month but now earns Dh5,500 at a new clerical job.

"I too do not like to live in sharing but what can I do? We live in a two-bedroom flat, each bedroom and the living room are sublet to a family while the kitchen is common. I pay Dh1,200 per month for that single room. I myself do not like to live in such cramped space but there is no way out for me, not until I secure another job that will give me the income to rent a single bedroom flat for my family," he said.

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