

New security strategies help minimise armed robbery cases

Officials say majority of such crimes are committed by visitors

- By Abdulla Rasheed, Abu Dhabi Editor
- Published: 00:00 February 4, 2010



Abu Dhabi: Armed robberies in the UAE are a rare occurrence, with statistics released by Abu Dhabi Police showing that only two such cases were recorded in Abu Dhabi and Dubai last year.

In an interview in the February edition of 999 Magazine, Colonel Maktoum Ali Al Sharifi, the Director of the Capital Police Directorate, Abu Dhabi Police, said the statistics showed that an armed robbery took place in Abu Dhabi early 2009. He added that this was the first case recorded since 2006.

"It was an armed robbery [involving] a sharp instrument [and] committed by an Asian expatriate. The target was a bank in Abu Dhabi. The man was arrested. It was an isolated incident by one individual," Col Al Sharifi said.

He said Abu Dhabi Police had coordinated with several vulnerable businesses and implemented a system utilising new devices and technologies to minimise such crimes.

"We have continuous security services provided to banks, money exchange houses, gold and jewellery shops and others," he said.

"We also have monitoring cameras that operate round the clock, besides police operatives that give us fresh information to pre-empt robbery attempts. Based on the information we gather, we distribute security tasks."

Al Sharifi also said statistics showed that the global downturn had not affected the crime scene in Abu Dhabi in any way.

He said all Abu Dhabi Police Departments were expanding their services in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia to cover all areas.

Col Al Sharifi said the police had successfully enhanced security to a very large extent.

A senior official at Dubai Police said most crimes of this nature were committed by visitors to the country.

Brigadier Khalil Al Mansouri, Director of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) at Dubai Police, told the magazine that perpetrators often come to the UAE on visit visas to carry out such criminal acts.

"Ninety-eight per cent of armed robbers are committed by visitors to the UAE. The rest are residents," he said. "The role of accomplices residing in the UAE is mainly logistical, helping armed robbers in arranging car rentals, accommodation and identification of targeted outlets. In other cases, resident accomplices are staff within the targeted outlets."

Brigadier Al Mansouri said there had been no upward or downward trend on the number of armed robberies because of the global financial crisis.

The police official said armed robbers are divided into two categories — international gangs targeting Dubai being a global financial and commercial centre, and visitors coming to Dubai, who want to get rich quick while in the country.

© Gulf News 2010