

# Rise in number of counterfeit bank note cases in UAE

Counterfeiting of currency has increased by 17% in the first ten months of year

- By Sara Janahi, Staff Reporter
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Dubai: Cases involving the counterfeiting of bank notes have increased by about 17 per cent in the first 10 months of this year, when compared to the corresponding period last year, police statistics have revealed.

The number of cases involving counterfeit bank notes increased from 168 cases in the first 10 months of 2009, to 196 cases in the first 10 months of 2010. The number of cases for the full year of 2009 is 207 according to police sources. Stringent measures and tighter vigil by police have led to unearthing more cases this year.

"Most cases involving forgery and counterfeiting have increased generally this year, most probably due to the increase of the population," said Aqeel Al Najar, head of the Questioned Documents Section at the General Department of Forensic Science and Criminology.

## Favoured currency

Dubai Police sources said the UAE dirham was the currency that was favoured by counterfeiters.

"The three most counterfeited banknotes we receive are the UAE dirham, the US dollar followed by the European euro," Al Najar said.

With the steady increase of cases involving counterfeited banknotes, Al Najar believes that there are simple ways to detect fake notes without the use of experts or machinery.

"There are different kinds of forgery when it comes to counterfeit bank notes. Some security features that are printed with the bank note in order to confirm its authenticity can be easily detected by a regular person without the [use] of machinery or the aid of experts. The lack of these security features indicates that the bank note is counterfeit or not," he said.

The first and simplest way to detect a counterfeit note is by touching it.

"Most bank notes are printed with paper that is made of 100 per cent of cotton and [which] is printed with three kinds of printing: offset, which results in flat printing; intaglio which results in an elevated print which can be felt; and letter press which results in indentation in the paper," Al Najjar said.

"The result is a slightly rough bank note that can be felt easily. If the bank note is smooth, that probably means it lacks those security features and therefore [has been] counterfeited."

He said the second security feature on all bank notes was the watermark.

"When banknotes are printed they usually carry watermarks that are unique to that [denomination]. They are available on the blank space on the bank note. The easiest way to detect them is to put the bank note against the light [to] see the watermark. If it doesn't appear then the bank note is obviously [a counterfeit]," Al Najjar explained.

Banknotes are printed with solid colours that most printers are unable to copy. This is another security feature that separates genuine bank notes from fake ones.

"Bank notes are printed with special printers that print with solid colours instead of the regular printers that are sold everywhere which print with the mixture of colours," he said.

"If you look carefully at a counterfeited bank note, you can see the colour printed in small dots instead of a solid colour. Usually magnifying glasses are required to spot the printing quality but this can also be detected with the naked eye," he said.

Although these methods can be used to detect counterfeit notes, Al Najjar said some counterfeit notes possess these security features and added that only experts would be able to identify them.

"The more facilities you have the better the output is; its all according to the capabilities and resources of the counterfeiter. Counterfeiting is supposed to fool the larger audience." Al Najjar said.