

# Drivers face jail term if they flee accident scene in Dubai

Courts will not be lenient with motorists involved even in cases where victims share the blame for causing mishap.

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Dubai: Drivers have been warned against fleeing the scene of an accident because they will not be given a lenient ruling, even in cases where the victim may have been responsible for causing the accident, a chief prosecutor said.

Motorists who do not flee from the scene of an accident they have caused may win a reduced penalty instead of a stiff one, especially in cases where victims share liability, Salah Bu Farousha, Head of Dubai Traffic Public Prosecution, said.

"Running away from an accident site backfires on those who cause the accident. According to the traffic law, a suspect who runs away from an accident site faces one month to three years in jail and/or a fine varying between Dh1,000 and Dh20,000. That's why today I am cautioning suspects against fleeing sites of accidents involving victims who might share the blame," Bu Farousha told Gulf News on Sunday.

His warning came after the Dubai Traffic Court of First Instance on Sunday slapped a Pakistani business man with a six-month jail term and fined him Dh50,600 after he knocked down three pedestrians, killing one and injuring two others, before proceeding to escape from the scene of the accident.

Presiding Judge Dr Ahmad Hassan Al Mutawa also revoked the driving licence of 34-year-old Pakistani K.M. for one year.

The accused was ordered to pay Dh200,000 in blood money to the Pakistani victim's family.

K.M. was found guilty of inattentive and reckless driving, fleeing the accident site, killing a pedestrian and injuring two others, leaving his car engine on at the crime scene plus driving a vehicle with an expired registration.

Bu Farousha warned that hit-and-run suspects could not escape from the hands of justice.

"Today, the traffic system in Dubai is sophisticated and advanced. Traffic patrols are everywhere. Surveillance cameras and radars are posted on roads, crossings and junctions.

"Any suspect who causes an accident can be easily tracked down and forwarded to justice in case he or she is at fault. No one can escape from the hands of traffic law enforcement officers.

### **Proof of innocence**

"On the other hand, why should drivers run away from an accident scene when in certain incidents they can win a reduced punishment or even prove their innocence?"

"In traffic accidents, it is untrue that responsibility is always borne by one party. In many incidents, more than one party shared the liability and responsibility for the accident," the chief traffic prosecutor told *Gulf News*.

He said any person could be involved in an accident.

"I don't advise any driver to run away from the accident site otherwise they will face more complications besides toughened punishments... Why should a suspect lose the possibility of proving his partial blame instead of bearing full responsibility?" he stressed.

Traffic police reports said K.M. drove recklessly and lost control of the steering wheel when he accidentally swerved to the side of the road and knocked down the three pedestrians who were standing at a pavement around 5am. He wrecked a signpost and a wooden wall before fleeing.

Sunday's verdict is still subject to appeal within 15 days.