

Road rage victim's family sues bus driver

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DUBAI // The family of a young man killed in a road rage incident more than three years ago has sued the bus driver convicted of his manslaughter and his insurers for Dh3 million.

Khaled Yousif Arab, an Emirati, was 24 when Mushtaq Khan Izzat, 32, ran him over after a roadside altercation on Al Khail Road on November 9, 2006. Mr Arab had applied to Dubai Police Academy to train as an officer shortly before.

Rashid Arab, the victim's uncle and the family's lawyer, told the Dubai Civil Court on Monday that his family had suffered "excessive moral distress" because of Mr Arab's death.

"The victim was in the early stages of his life and had his whole life ahead of him," he said. "The victim's dream was to serve his country and join the police force, and when he was killed, he and his parents were awaiting the response from Dubai Police Academy on his application."

The Dh3 million (US\$817,000) claim is against both Izzat and his insurance company. Mr Arab told the court that the damages filed against Al Buhaira National Insurance in Sharjah were based on their refusal to pay the blood money ordered by the courts when Izzat was convicted.

Majida Mohammed, the legal affairs manager of Al Buhaira, said yesterday they were aware of the suit and were preparing a response, which will be presented to the civil court on March 4.

The Dubai Criminal Court of First Instance found Izzat guilty of premeditated murder on June 16, 2007, sentencing him to 15 years in jail and ordering him to pay Dh200,000 in blood money to Arab's family.

However, the Dubai Court of Appeals on April 1, 2008, reduced Izzat's sentence to three years after it changed the charge from premeditated murder to manslaughter. The appeals court also fined him Dh3,000 and kept the blood money order in place.

The court had heard that Izzat, a Pakistani, had been driving behind Arab's car but then pulled alongside him and tried to swerve into him. Prosecutors said that when Arab pulled off the road to challenge Izzat's behaviour, the bus driver ran him over and then fled the scene.

Arab's 17-year-old cousin, who was a passenger, reported the incident to the police. Izzat was arrested and charged three days later.

Izzat admitted deliberately running over Arab and told the court his actions had been provoked by "road rage". He claimed that his bus had clipped the victim's car and that Arab and his cousin then blocked his way and approached his bus on foot.

He claimed that he reversed and tried to flee, fearing the two men were going to hurt him, but they continued to pursue him and tried to stop him several times.

On the fifth attempt, they blocked the road in front of him. He told the court that as Arab was approaching the bus, he stamped on the accelerator and ran over him.