

Dies ist der Cache von Google von [http://www.zawya.com/mobile/default.cfm/sid20090805\\_3246/Dubai%20legal%20system%20on%20trial/actstory](http://www.zawya.com/mobile/default.cfm/sid20090805_3246/Dubai%20legal%20system%20on%20trial/actstory). Es handelt sich dabei um ein Abbild der Seite, wie diese am 5. Dez. 2009 08:00:07 GMT angezeigt wurde. Die [aktuelle Seite](#) sieht mittlerweile eventuell anders aus. [Weitere Informationen](#)

Diese Suchbegriffe sind markiert: **dubai legal system trial**

[Nur-Text-Version](#)



[Sign In](#)

Company

[Go](#)

[ZDJ News](#)

[Top Stories](#)

[Markets](#)

## Dubai legal system on trial - Financial Times

Wednesday, Aug 05, 2009

Charles Ridley, a Bahrain-based British businessman, is facing **trial** in the **Dubai court system**. He is one of seven people accused of defrauding **Dubai** Islamic Bank of more than \$500m, charges which he denies.

However, Mr Ridley, standing in white prisoner's uniform in Dubai's court of first instance, can understand proceedings only when the translator relates a direct question from the judge, or when the testimony turns to English. Even then he has to overcome the poor acoustics of the wood-panelled court.

"I need a translator so I can understand what is going on," Mr Ridley says.

The high-profile case is one of many inching their way through the **system** this summer as the government's corruption investigation leads to court cases.

The fate of Mr Ridley and other defendants has given rise to increasing calls for **legal** reform of the **Dubai** judiciary, which Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the emirate's ruler, has criticised as outdated and inefficient.

Also the sharp economic downturn in the city has prompted an increase in financial crimes, especially default, which remains a criminal rather than civil matter in **Dubai**.

"We need full **legal** reform to update all the laws, not just commercial but also criminal," says Habib al-Mulla, a prominent **Dubai**-based lawyer.

"Part of the issue is people are facing prosecution and the laws aren't adapted to financial crimes, and the judiciary can't handle the situation if laws are still holding us back. The problem, though, is when will it be done?"

Mr Ridley's unheeded call for a simultaneous translator would be simple enough for the courts to satisfy, but changes to other elements of the United Arab Emirates judicial **system** would need approval from the federal government in Abu Dhabi, the capital.

The issue has been thrown into sharper relief by the case of Abdulsalam al-Marri, a former chief executive of Lagoons, a property development, who was held for nine months before last week being acquitted of bribery charges.

Mr Marri is one of many executives caught up in the **Dubai** government's anti-corruption investigation, which was launched last year. He feels aggrieved at having spent almost a year behind bars, during which he missed the birth of his twins, and his professional reputation is shattered.

"We trust our **legal system**, but the procedures were not right. We can't sit in jail and then go to court," says Mr Marri, who is likely to face an appeal from the state prosecutor.

According to lawyers who declined to be identified, one of the most important **legal** reforms needed in the UAE is

prompt investigation and presentation of evidence against the accused.

They are also concerned about the freer rein extended to the state security services by the public prosecutor's office, which they say is a change from a decade ago when the security services were on a tighter leash.

Google Analytics

“The prosecution should have a maximum six months to prove their case and charge defendants,” says one senior lawyer.

In recent years, the internal security service has played a larger role in investigations of white-collar crime, especially those relating to government corruption.

Suspects detained by state security are frequently held for weeks, sometimes in solitary confinement and without access to **legal** or consular access, lawyers say.

Shahram Zadeh, a longstanding Iranian expatriate in **Dubai**, says he was detained for two months last year. After extensive interrogation, Mr Zadeh was released without charge but has had his passport withheld.

Since then, the authorities have refused to accept attempts by Mr Zadeh to launch criminal proceedings against members of the ruling family over the ownership of Al Fajer Properties.

Al Fajer claims Mr Zadeh stole money from the company, but the courts are hearing a \$1.9bn civil law suit filed by Mr Zadeh against Sheikh Hasher bin Maktoum Al Maktoum and two of his children in which he claims they used the detention to seize the company illegally. He alleges that they were only sponsors and did not invest. They deny the allegation.

Lawyers say defendants should be allowed to have a **legal** representative present when they are being questioned, and police should stop sitting in on the weekly conversations lawyers are permitted to have with detained clients in the run-up to and during court hearings.

The public prosecution's file of evidence should also be made available if suspects are detained for long periods before being charged and tried, the lawyers say.

Changes to the commercial courts – especially those that deal with the collapsed real estate market – are also needed, the lawyers argue. These changes could include cheaper fees and more efficient scheduling of cases, which at present can drag on for months.

But even if the city decides to overhaul criminal and commercial procedures, the matter is federal and therefore needs to be addressed by the government based in Abu Dhabi.

“In the end, **Dubai** can improve efficiency on the edge, but this will still be short [of what is required] unless they get the federal umbrella to change,” says one critic.

*By Simeon Kerr in Dubai*

© Copyright The Financial Times Ltd 2009. Privacy policy.

[Email this story](#)

[Back to Top](#) | [Feedback](#)

---

Support: +971 4 3635663 - [Email us](#)

Copyright © 2009 ABQ Zawya Ltd.