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British pair challenge Dubai 'kiss' sentence

By Joe Sinclair, PA

Sunday, 14 March 2010

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A British pair will appear in court in Dubai today accused of kissing in public.

Ayman Najafi, 24, will appear in court alongside a 25-year-old female British tourist to appeal against a one-month prison sentence.

In a phone call to his distraught mother yesterday, Mr Najafi said: "I haven't done anything wrong mum, hopefully I will clear my name and then I can come back."

The pair were allegedly seen kissing on the mouth in a restaurant, breaching Dubai's strict decency laws.

They were arrested by police in November last year and appeared in court last week.

According to reports, a judge at Dubai's Misdemeanours Court heard written evidence from the 38-year-old mother who initially complained to police.

She said she was offended by their behaviour at the Jumeirah Beach Residence, where she was dining with her daughter.

The judge dismissed Mr Najafi's claim that he had merely kissed the woman on the cheek and sentenced both defendants to a month in jail followed by deportation.

The Britons were bailed pending today's appeal against the sentence.

The Dubai authorities are holding their passports so that they cannot leave the country.

Mr Najafi has been working for marketing firm Hay Group in Dubai for about 18 months.

Speaking from the family home in Palmers Green, north London, his mother Maida Najafi said: "My Ayman is a good boy, he's very wise and mature. I can't believe it.

"He knows the rules over there. He would never do that. He wouldn't even do it over here.

"He said, 'I haven't done anything wrong mum, hopefully I will clear my name and then I can come back'.

"He's an unbelievable young man, strong, hard working, confident, he is doing so well."

A Foreign Office spokeswoman said: "We can confirm that a British national was arrested in Dubai on November 27. Consular assistance was provided at the time."

She said she had no further details at this time.

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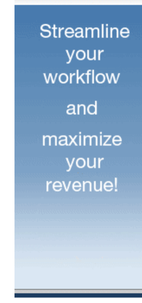

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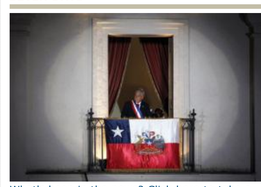

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