

Legal Bulletin

Al Mubasheri Advocates and Legal Consultancy

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Practice Areas:

- Litigation & Alternative Disputes Resolutions
- Banking & Finance
- Investment
- Construction
- Insurance Law
- Intellectual Property
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UAE antiquities law would impose up to Dh10m in fines and imprisonment

Abu Dhabi, Anyone who defaces or destroys an antiquity could face up to Dh10 million in fines and a minimum of two years in jail, according to a draft law discussed by the Federal National Council.

The council discussed the first seven articles of the law, which include a number of unprecedented penalties to help ensure that the UAE's historic sights and artefacts are neither tampered with or destroyed. It imposes fines of between Dh500,000 and

Dh10m and jail time on anyone who is convicted of destroying, damaging or distorting an antiquity.

Also, anyone who builds, plants or changes the characteristics of an archaeological site, conducts archaeological digging without a permit, smuggles antiquities into or out of the country, or replicates a national or fo-

-reign antiquity to scam others will face the same penalties. Those who violate licensing conditions for digs, or take, transfer or use archaeological ruins or stones without a licence, face fines between 100,000 Dh and 300,000 Dh, and /or jail time.

-ty or the nearest police station within 48 hours.

“Antiquities are to be identified as items of national interest and importance and the ownership of both portable and non-portable items are for the nation regardless of who has fou-



Moreover, anyone in possession of an antiquity who does not properly register it, or who takes action regarding the antiquities without a permit, will face a minimum of two years in jail and/or a fine between Dh50,000 and Dh200,000.

Article 8 of the draft law says whoever discovers or comes across an antiquity by coincidence must report it to the concerned authori-

-nd it,” said the FNC committee that oversaw the draft law prior to the session. The committee also suggested halving the time it takes to document antiquities to a year.

The committee's report explained the bill is important because the UAE is a signatory to the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import,

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Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970, and in agreement with the GCC Centre for Antiquities. Working towards the preservation of antiquities will enrich national identity, which is in line with the UAE's 2021 plan.



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