# British teen Marcus Fakana appeals for clemency after Dubai jail sentence for underage relationship



A British teenager, Marcus Fakana, has reached out for clemency from the UAE authorities, expressing deep remorse over his situation following a one-year prison sentence in Dubai for engaging in a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old girl. Now 19, Fakana was arrested during a family holiday after the girl's mother discovered intimate messages between the two and reported him to local authorities.

Under UAE law, the age of consent is set at 18, meaning Fakana's actions constituted a criminal offence despite the consensual nature of the relationship. This legal framework has sparked a public outcry and ignited a debate over the complexities of cultural differences surrounding sexual conduct. The girl, who has since turned 18, was described by campaigners as a "victim" in this matter, having only just reached the legal threshold herself.

Fakana’s case has drawn considerable attention, raising awareness about the harsh legal repercussions foreign visitors can face in the UAE. Radha Stirling, founder of the advocacy group Detained in Dubai, described the experience as “the most traumatic and life-altering” for Fakana. She highlighted that he never intended to contravene local laws, and called on Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE’s vice president and prime minister, to consider his appeal for compassion.

The narrative of teenage romance has often been romanticised, yet this case starkly illustrates the potential ramifications that arise when different legal systems intersect. Stirling advised that parents need to educate their children about laws that may diverge sharply from those in their home country, as actions considered innocuous in the UK could lead to severe legal consequences in Dubai.

Fakana's situation has gained further traction as his family has sought the support of British authorities. They have appealed to Foreign Secretary David Lammy and the British Embassy for assistance, yet reports indicate that the Foreign Office maintains a policy of not publicly commenting on individual cases. Although officials allegedly remain in contact with Fakana and his family, the response has been characterised as insufficient by some. The family's frustration was amplified by a lack of effective advocacy from UK representatives.

At the time of his sentencing, a government spokesperson reaffirmed Dubai’s commitment to fair judicial processes, stating, “Dubai’s legal system is committed to protecting the rights of all individuals.” However, many observers and supporters of Fakana view the case as emblematic of a broader failure to balance legal adherence with humane treatment.

In the UK, reactions have been swift, with protests held by supporters demanding jobs over severe sentences given the context of what they argue was a consensual relationship. These public demonstrations indicate a growing concern over teenagers travelling abroad and the potential for their lives to be irrevocably changed by interactions within jurisdictions that enforce strict laws.

As Fakana serves his sentence in Al-Awir prison, he grapples with the lasting implications of this encounter, which has now cast a shadow over his future. He has expressed a yearning to return home, with hopes that institutions may show him leniency. While many in the UK sympathise with his plight, the complexities of international law and cultural norms remain an undercurrent in discussions about justice and compassion.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-dubai-teenage-sex-clemency-b2766603.html), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly2zq1yl0ko)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/marcus-fakana-british-teen-sentenced-over-dubai-holiday-romance-with-17-year-old-girl-surrenders-to-authorities-13281583), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy4pvkxq50eo)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly2zq1yl0ko), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce90eljzr0eo), [[6]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-david-lammy-dubai-uae-b2665770.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/british-teen-breaks-silence-jailed-dubai-holiday-romance-b1199589.html), [[6]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-david-lammy-dubai-uae-b2665770.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-dubai-teenage-sex-clemency-b2766603.html), [[6]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-david-lammy-dubai-uae-b2665770.html), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce90eljzr0eo)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-dubai-teenage-sex-clemency-b2766603.html), [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/marcus-fakana-british-teen-sentenced-over-dubai-holiday-romance-with-17-year-old-girl-surrenders-to-authorities-13281583)
* Paragraph 7 – [[6]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-david-lammy-dubai-uae-b2665770.html), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy4pvkxq50eo)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-dubai-teenage-sex-clemency-b2766603.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly2zq1yl0ko> - An 18-year-old British man, Marcus Fakana, was sentenced to one year in prison in Dubai for engaging in a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old British girl during a holiday. The girl's mother reported the relationship to Dubai police after discovering messages between the teenagers. Under UAE law, sex with anyone under 18 is illegal. The campaign group Detained in Dubai called the judgment an 'utter disgrace' and stated that Fakana would appeal against the 'unreasonable' sentence.
3. <https://news.sky.com/story/marcus-fakana-british-teen-sentenced-over-dubai-holiday-romance-with-17-year-old-girl-surrenders-to-authorities-13281583> - Marcus Fakana, 18, from London, was arrested and charged after the girl's mother found their chats and pictures. He intends to serve his year-long sentence but still hopes the UK foreign secretary or Dubai's ruler will intervene, a campaign group says. Fakana previously said the pair kept their romance secret from the girl's family 'because they were strict' and had hoped to continue seeing each other back in the UK. However, he said police turned up at his family's hotel and took him into custody without explanation.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce90eljzr0eo> - Supporters of an 18-year-old Briton jailed for having sex with a 17-year-old British girl in Dubai have staged a protest in central London. Marcus Fakana from Tottenham is serving a one-year prison sentence after being convicted of having sex with the girl, who has now turned 18, when they were both on holiday. The girl's mother reported him to the Dubai authorities after seeing messages between the two when she had returned to the UK. The age of consent in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is 18.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy4pvkxq50eo> - An 18-year-old British man sentenced to a year in prison for a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old British girl in Dubai has appealed to the emirate's ruler 'to let me go home'. Marcus Fakana, from north London, began a secretive holiday romance in September with another Londoner, who is now aged 18. After returning home and seeing pictures and chats, the girl's mother reported the relationship to Dubai police, who arrested Fakana at his hotel. Sex with another person aged under 18 is illegal in Dubai.
6. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-david-lammy-dubai-uae-b2665770.html> - The family of a British teenager convicted in Dubai for having sex with a 17-year-old girl while on holiday has accused the foreign secretary of an 'outrageous' refusal to help them. Marcus Fakana, 18, was sentenced to a year in prison for having sex with the teenager from London while he was on holiday with his parents in Dubai in August. The girl who he met while staying at the same hotel was one month short of her 18th birthday, but sex with anyone under 18 is an offence in the Gulf state.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/british-teen-breaks-silence-jailed-dubai-holiday-romance-b1199589.html> - Marcus Fakana, 18, from London, was arrested and charged after the girl's mother found their chats and pictures. He intends to serve his year-long sentence but still hopes the UK foreign secretary or Dubai's ruler will intervene, a campaign group says. Fakana previously said the pair kept their romance secret from the girl's family 'because they were strict' and had hoped to continue seeing each other back in the UK. However, he said police turned up at his family's hotel and took him into custody without explanation.