# British teenager jailed in Dubai appeals for clemency over consensual relationship with minor



A British teenager, Markus Fakana, currently imprisoned in Dubai for having a consensual sexual relationship with a 17-year-old girl, has appealed for clemency to the UAE's vice president and prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. At just 19 years old, Fakana has endured significant hardship since his arrest, which followed a holiday romance with a fellow British tourist. The encounter led to a year-long prison sentence after the girl's mother reported the relationship upon discovering messages exchanged between the two teens.

The incident underscores the stringent legal environment in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where the age of consent is set at 18. Despite the complexities of the situation, advocates for Fakana argue that the events would not have constituted a crime in the UK, raising questions about cultural and legal disparities for tourists in the Gulf state. Radha Stirling, the founder of Detained in Dubai, described the ordeal as “the most traumatic and life-altering experience imaginable” for Fakana, emphasising that his actions were not intended to break the law.

In his plea for mercy, Fakana expressed remorse and a desire to return home to rebuild his life following a traumatic experience that has affected his mental well-being and future prospects. Stirling has been vocal in her support for his appeal, asserting that what occurred—a consensual relationship—should not impose a lasting stigma on such a young individual. “If Marcus could go back in time, he would,” she noted, calling on the Dubai government to show compassion.

Fakana's family has sought assistance from the British Embassy in Dubai, as well as from Foreign Secretary David Lammy. While the Foreign Office has declared it is in contact with Fakana's family, Lammy has refrained from commenting on the specific case, instead highlighting the importance of adhering to local laws while abroad. His remarks have drawn criticism from Fakana’s family and advocates, who feel that more robust diplomatic intervention is required to secure his release.

Adding further complexity to the situation, it is worth noting that although the UAE has recently loosened some restrictions surrounding sexual conduct for tourists, the local legal framework regarding minors remains strict. This case marks a poignant example of the cultural gaps that can have immediate, severe repercussions for individuals navigating the laws of foreign nations.

As this developing story unfolds, it remains essential to consider the implications not just for Fakana but for numerous young travelers who may inadvertently find themselves in similar predicaments. The balancing act between respecting local laws and fostering cultural awareness is critical, yet the mental and emotional costs of such encounters can be profound.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-dubai-teenage-sex-clemency-b2766603.html), [[4]](https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/21/middleeast/dubai-uae-romance-jail-intl-hnk/index.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[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/cy4pvkxq50eo), [[6]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-david-lammy-dubai-uae-b2665770.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://news.sky.com/story/marcus-fakana-18-jailed-for-one-year-in-dubai-after-holiday-romance-with-17-year-old-girl-13261772), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/british-teen-breaks-silence-jailed-dubai-holiday-romance-b1199589.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-david-lammy-dubai-uae-b2665770.html)

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/cy4pvkxq50eo> - An 18-year-old British man, Marcus Fakana, was sentenced to a 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. Fakana has appealed to the UAE's vice president and prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, for clemency, expressing remorse and seeking release to return home. The UK government has been in contact with his family and legal team during this distressing situation.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly2zq1yl0ko> - Marcus Fakana, an 18-year-old British man, was sentenced to one year in prison in Dubai for 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. Fakana has appealed to the UAE's vice president and prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, for clemency, expressing remorse and seeking release to return home. The UK government has been in contact with his family and legal team during this distressing situation.
4. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/21/middleeast/dubai-uae-romance-jail-intl-hnk/index.html> - An 18-year-old British man, Marcus Fakana, was sentenced to a 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. Fakana has appealed to the UAE's vice president and prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, for clemency, expressing remorse and seeking release to return home. The UK government has been in contact with his family and legal team during this distressing situation.
5. <https://news.sky.com/story/marcus-fakana-18-jailed-for-one-year-in-dubai-after-holiday-romance-with-17-year-old-girl-13261772> - An 18-year-old British man, Marcus Fakana, was sentenced to a 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. Fakana has appealed to the UAE's vice president and prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, for clemency, expressing remorse and seeking release to return home. The UK government has been in contact with his family and legal team during this distressing situation.
6. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/marcus-fakana-david-lammy-dubai-uae-b2665770.html> - The family of Marcus Fakana, an 18-year-old British man sentenced to a year in prison in Dubai for a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old British girl during a holiday, has accused UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy of failing to assist them. Lammy stated that Britons should 'follow the rules' in other countries and that the Foreign Office cannot interfere in the judicial systems of other nations. The family's campaign group, Detained in Dubai, has called for diplomatic intervention to secure Fakana's release.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/british-teen-breaks-silence-jailed-dubai-holiday-romance-b1199589.html> - Marcus Fakana, an 18-year-old British man, was sentenced to a 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. Fakana has appealed to the UAE's vice president and prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, for clemency, expressing remorse and seeking release to return home. The UK government has been in contact with his family and legal team during this distressing situation.