
Nine injured in city centre blaze

Anna Seaman

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Firefighters battle the blaze, which spread to several parked cars. Police could not confirm the cause of the fire. [Lee Hoagland / The National](#)

ABU DHABI // An eight-storey apartment building and several cars were engulfed by fire yesterday afternoon.

The building on Airport Road in the Karama Street area of the capital was home to 28 families, who were all reported to have been evacuated safely.

Parked cars were also caught in the blaze, which some witnesses were concerned would spread to a nearby petrol station.

Police later said that nine people were injured. Three required treatment at Sheikh Khalifa Medical Centre while the remaining six were treated at the scene by a mobile field hospital. Residents were seen being helped out of the building into ambulances.

Police could not confirm the cause of the fire but onlookers said they thought it began in a textile shop on the ground floor and rapidly spread up through the building.

One man, who did not want to give his name, emerged from the building drenched in sweat. His clothing was torn and spattered with blood stains and his eyes were rimmed with red from smoke.

“My uncle was in there,” he said. “He was in his showroom on the ground floor when the fire started and he had to jump out of the window. I had to make sure he was OK.”

The blaze started at about 3.30pm and the alarm was immediately raised. By 4.30pm, the entire building was on fire and a helicopter flew over head to help direct the emergency services.



Thousands of people crowded the streets and police closed Airport Road in the direction of the Corniche.

Baraah Abdel Jabbar watched the scene unfold with her two sisters. “It started from the first floor and spread up,” she said. “I thought it was like something from hell. I didn’t know what to do.”

Ms Jabbar, from Sudan, said she had friends who lived in the building and was searching for them in the crowds. “We still didn’t find them. The police told us everyone was safe but we are still looking,” she added.

Ashish Kumar Prem was on his way to the building when the fire broke out. “My mother and father were in there,” Mr Prem, from India, said. “I was on my way home when my colleague called and told me about the fire. I came home as quickly as possible and saw this. It was awful, horrible, really horrible.”

Mr Prem said he had lost many possessions in the fire, but he was thankful there were no casualties. “They are alive, thank God; that’s all that matters,” he said.

Police said an investigation into the cause of the fire was under way.

Another fire broke out at the Old Al Ain Central Market early yesterday.

Several textiles and clothing stores were destroyed in the blaze, but no casualties were reported. Civil defence suspected an electrical fault caused the blaze.