

## Real Estate: Part 5

Talking about the real estate always digs up memories for me, some of which bring joy and others which could make you cry. Last Tuesday when I was in Bu Khalifa's diwaniyah, I overheard one of the respectable men who is a real estate developer briefly asking another about the laws related to real estate. I heard him say, "I bought two properties from an auction that was held by the Ministry of Justice. When it was over, I paid the full amount according to the terms of the auction, but it's been two years now and neither of the two properties have been registered in my name. The court took the money and paid it all to the other party, and I'm left with no money and no property." Our friend the legal expert replied, "This isn't the responsibility of the court. You have to clear the property with the municipality and get it registered yourself." The real estate developer replied, "Ok, but how is it my fault that the ministry sold me an illegal property?" I was listening in because the topic has to do with my field work, so I intervened and asked him to tell me the whole story. He explained that municipality refused to register the deed because there was a building violation in one of the properties he purchased. The hallway in one of the two buildings was 110 centimeters wide while in the approved plan it was 120. So the whole issue was about 10 centimeters difference, and the municipality refused to register the deed. The victim went on to say, "The building had already been built and approved by the municipality in this condition, so why am I being held accountable for this now? It should be the ones who were in charge of inspecting and issuing the power supply certificate to the former owner that should be held accountable. As for the second building, it's abandoned and so old that the only thing I can do is demolish it and rebuild, but again it had illegal additions when I bought it." Indeed, the worst misfortune is the one at which you can only laugh. On one hand, the government applies judicial decisions by seizing and selling assets at auction, it takes the buyer's money, repays all liens on the property, but it won't take the final step to register the property in the name of the buyer. Then on the other hand, the municipality flouts those decisions and accuses people of building code violations when the real source of the problem is the