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May/June 2025

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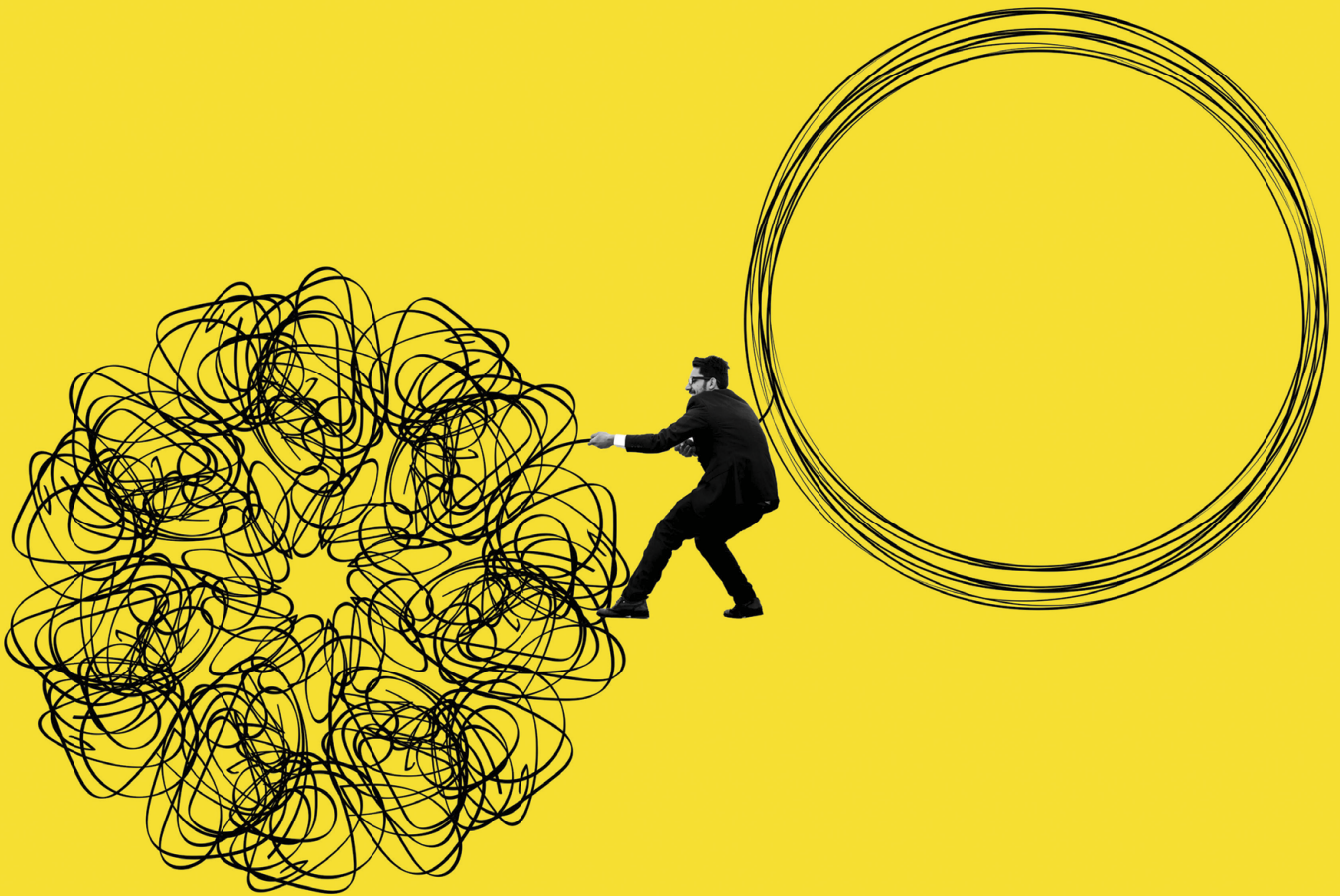
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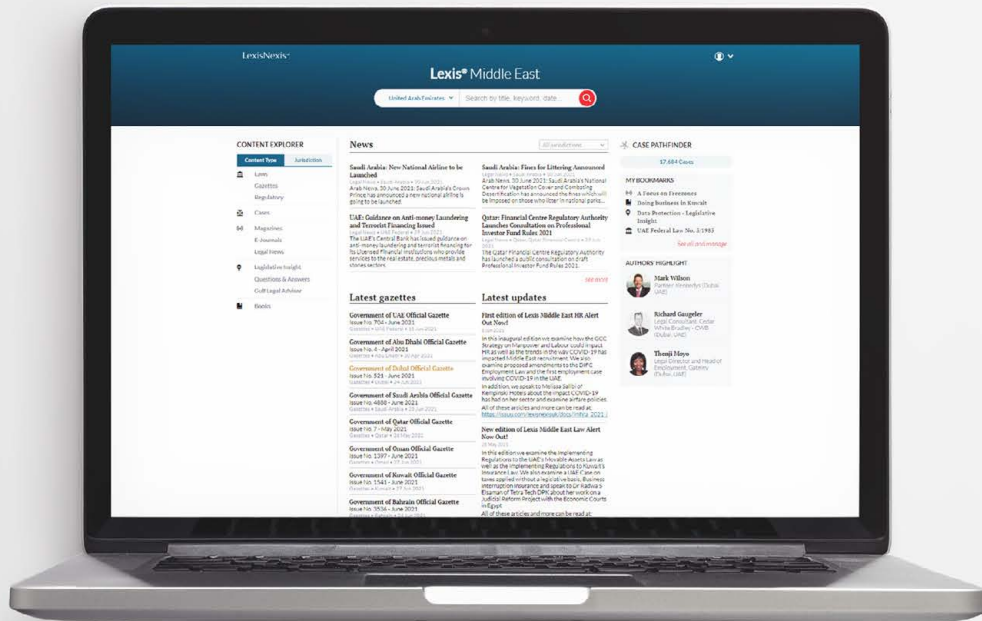
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A ROUND-UP OF LEGAL, FINANCE AND TAX DEVELOPMENTS ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST



# ENFORCING CHANGE

The DIFC Centre Courts Law



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# QUICK CHANGE

One thing you get used to reporting on law in the GCC is how quickly and unexpectedly change can happen. While in other jurisdictions legal changes are often known about far in advance of when laws are issued as a result of public consultations and the issue of draft laws, in this region those approaches are often the exception rather than the rule. This can sometimes lead to very unexpected legal changes happening quite suddenly, surprising, even the Lexis Middle East editorial team who check for law changes and scan for legal news across the region on a daily basis.

In this issue we cover two such changes - in Dubai - which happened within days of each other and came out of the blue. The first is the new Dubai Law No. 2/2025 on the DIFC Courts which has made significant changes to the way those courts will operate, in a range of areas including jurisdiction and enforcement. This law has repealed and replaced two major laws - the DIFC Court Law (DIFC Law No. 10/2004) and Dubai Law No. 12/2004 (also known as the Judicial Authority Law or JAL) which up until now had been referenced in over 200 cases. The second surprise law we cover in this issue is Dubai Executive Council Decision No. 11/2025 which has brought in significant changes to way the freezone entities can operate in onshore Dubai.

However, Dubai is not the only jurisdiction where significant changes are being brought in. Another good example is the new Investment and Trade Court which is expected to be up and running in Oman in October 2025. As a result, we also consider the law which has established that new court Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025. Perhaps the lesson here is a simple one - in this region it is vital to stay up to date. If you would like to be added to our free controlled circulation to ensure you never miss an issue of this or the other Lexis Middle East magazines contact [tanya.jain@lexisnexis.com](mailto:tanya.jain@lexisnexis.com)

Claire Melvin - Editor

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# ENFORCING CHANGE

Dr Mahmood Hussain of M&Co explains how the aim to simplify the legal framework governing the DIFC courts has led to a single, more comprehensive law being issued.



**“D**ubai Law No. 2/2025, the Dubai International Financial Centre Courts law was issued on 3 March 2025 and came into force on 14 March 2025,” states Dr Mahmood Hussain. “Its primary aim was to consolidate the legislative framework which governs the DIFC Courts, as Article 43(A) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 mandates it repeals both DIFC Law No. 10/2004 which originally established the DIFC Courts and Dubai Law No. 12/2004 which is known as the Judicial Authority Law or JAL. Its main objective is to enhance judicial efficiency, clarify jurisdictional boundaries, modernise court procedures, and promote mediation as a core dispute resolution mechanism.”

“While a number of the procedures found in the new law previously existed, Dubai Law No. 2/2025 has codified them within the primary legislation, and given them greater statutory weight,” Dr Hussain adds. “For example, a single, clear article (Article



**Dr Mahmood Hussain**  
Founder, M&Co

14 of Dubai Law No. 2/2025) now defines the DIFC Courts’ jurisdiction over civil, commercial, and employment matters, and has specific provisions for arbitration-related claims and opt-in agreements. It is also worth noting that employment claims which are often handled by the Small Claims Tribunal (SCT) have been explicitly included, which helps provide greater legal certainty.”

“In addition, Article 4(B) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 explicitly gives the Chief Justice authority to permit proceedings (or their parts) to occur outside the physical DIFC premises or via virtual means. While Article 8(B) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025, formally permits testimony via video link or other electronic means subject to court direction.”

## JURISDICTION

“Key jurisdictional gateways have been detailed or clarified under Article 14 of Dubai Law No. 2/2025,” Dr Hussain states. “These include Core DIFC Matters which are claims involving the DIFC itself, its bodies, or registered entities; DIFC Contracts which are claims





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arising from contracts or transactions, within the DIFC; and DIFC Property claims which relate to property situated within the DIFC. Article 14(A)(4) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 then explicitly confirms the DIFC Courts' exclusive jurisdiction to hear claims and applications relating to trust instruments established or registered within the DIFC and Article 12(A)(2) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 establishes the non-Muslim wills registry, positioning the DIFC as a key jurisdiction for succession planning for non-Muslims wills."

"Article 31(5) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 also grants the Enforcement Judge jurisdiction over the enforcement of non-Muslim wills registered in the DIFC, which applies whether the assets subject to enforcement are located within or outside the DIFC's geographical boundaries."

"Article 14(A)(5)-(6) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 grants exclusive jurisdiction for various arbitration-related claims, including ratification and recognition of awards under the DIFC Law No. 1/2008 (the DIFC Arbitration Law), claims arising from arbitral proceedings which take place within the DIFC, and if the parties have not agreed on the seat or legal place of arbitration," Dr

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION

### Article 3 of Dubai Law No. 2/2025

The provisions of this Law shall apply to the DIFC Courts established under Dubai Law No. 12/2004, as referred to herein above.

(Source: Lexis Middle East Law)

Hussain continues. "In addition, Article 14(B) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 has preserved the ability for parties to opt into DIFC Courts jurisdiction via written agreement, but now requires these agreements must be specific, clear, and express, which promotes party autonomy while minimising ambiguity."

"Under Article 14(C) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 the ability to decline jurisdiction if parties have a valid agreement for another court which was previously found in Dubai Law No. 12/2004 has also been retained but there is a crucial new ground as the court may also decline if a competent court has already issued a final judgment enforceable in the DIFC. This helps reinforce the principle of res judicata and prevent duplicate litigation."

## OTHER CHANGES

### CONTEMPT

Article 35 of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 provides a more detailed statutory framework for contempt than before. It outlines specific actions constituting contempt, such as non-compliance with orders or 'wilfully insulting' court officers. It does not introduce criminal penalties like imprisonment directly within the DIFC Courts' remit but Article 35(B) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 grants the DIFC Courts broad power to 'take any measures they deem necessary' for the proper administration of justice. There is a provision allowing referral to the Attorney General of Dubai, which could potentially lead to separate criminal proceedings.

### PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

Article 15(4) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 provides explicit statutory power for the DIFC Courts to issue precautionary measures including injunctions, such as freezing orders, in support of foreign court litigation or arbitration proceedings. Codifying this power provides certainty and helps strengthen the DIFC's role as a supportive jurisdiction for international disputes, particularly where relevant assets are located within the DIFC or wider Dubai.

"Article 14(A)(7) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 also explicitly confers jurisdiction on the DIFC Courts where provided by international treaties acceded to by the UAE."

### MEDIATION CENTRE

"In addition, a new mediation centre is to be established under Article 13 of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 and there is enhanced enforcement of certain settlement agreements under Article 30(B) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025," states Dr Hussain.

"This explicitly includes '[s]igned settlement agreements that are approved by the DIFC Courts Mediation Centre' or 'ratified by the DIFC Courts in the course of the proceedings' as qualifying for an Enforcement Writ so mediated outcomes have direct enforceability, like court judgments, which will make this a more robust and final dispute resolution option. It should also help mediation become a more integral and formalised part of the dispute resolution process in the DIFC. Specific operational rules for the new Centre will be developed and issued separately."

### ENFORCEMENT

"There have also been other important changes to the DIFC Courts' enforcement regime which are found in Article 29-33 of Dubai Law No. 2/2025," states Dr Hussain. "For example, Article 29 of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 has established the role of the Enforcement Judge within the Court of First Instance which should help streamline oversight of enforcement procedures. Enforcement writs are also now defined as the necessary instrument for initiating enforcement, obtainable based on judgments, orders, ratified

arbitral awards, and significantly, mediated settlement agreements."

"In addition, the new framework clarifies the Enforcement Judge's role in enforcing judgments from foreign courts within the DIFC," Dr Hussain adds.

"There has also been an important clarification on the DIFC Courts' role as a conduit jurisdiction. While the term 'conduit jurisdiction' is not explicitly used in the new law, Article 32 of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 which governs enforcement outside the DIFC via the Dubai Courts, effectively preserves this mechanism.

This practice, which was established through case law under Dubai Law No. 12/2004 allows the DIFC Courts to recognise foreign judgments or awards which can then be enforced onshore in Dubai via the Dubai Courts, even if the debtor has no assets in the DIFC. Codifying this mechanism in primary law, may potentially, enhance it and provide vital legislative certainty on this area which should help reinforce the DIFC's strategic role as a global enforcement hub."

### COURT ASSESSORS

"DIFC Court Judges are also now able to appoint one or more independent experts as Court Assessors," Dr Hussain states. "Their role will be to assist the court on specific technical or complex issues within cases, using their specialist knowledge. For example these could include an engineer in a construction defect dispute, a forensic accountant if a complex company valuation is needed or an insurance industry expert in a coverage dispute. Assessors must be independent, disclose conflicts, and take an oath. Crucially, parties must also be given the opportunity to make submissions on any advice provided by an assessor, in order to ensure procedural fairness while allowing the court to benefit from this specialist expertise."

### WHAT'S NEXT?

"Although this law is already in force there are a number of transitional arrangements," Dr Hussain states. "Article 43(C) of Dubai Law No. 2/2025 acts as a crucial 'savings clause' which ensures operational continuity by stating existing regulations, resolutions, and decisions issued under the repealed laws will remain valid unless they conflict with Dubai Law No. 2/2025, until they are formally replaced by new instruments issued under this law's authority. This means the existing Rules of the DIFC Courts (RDC) and other secondary legislation will largely continue to apply for now. Although there are likely to be new or amended rules, and other procedural adjustments in the future which will probably be implemented in a phased manner."

"Those using the DIFC Courts should be looking at their Dispute Resolution Clauses, as a result of the clarifications on jurisdiction (under Article 14 of Dubai Law No. 2/2025), particularly on opt-in agreements which now need to be 'specific, clear and express'", Dr Hussain continues.

"It is also important that they understand the enforcement pathways, the procedures involving the enforcement judge and the conduit jurisdiction mechanism under Article 32 of Dubai Law No. 2/2025. In addition, it is now worth factoring in mediation as a result of its increased prominence and better enforceability. Court users should be considering its potential strategic use earlier in the dispute life-cycle. Finally, it will be important to watch out for new secondary legislation, and to stay informed about RDC changes and other specific rules which will impact the procedural requirements in the DIFC Courts."



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# LEGAL ROUND-UP

COVERING RECENT KEY LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS – REGION-WIDE

## UAE

### FAKE EMIRATISATION



Cabinet Decision No. 43/2025 has been issued which introduces new penalties for violations of Emiratisation requirements and initiatives. Administrative fines will range from 20,000 to 100,000 AED for each time false documents or data submitted in order to obtain services or benefits from the Nafis programme or evade Emiratisation requirements. Establishments which fail to report changes affecting benefit eligibility will also face fines of 20,000 AED per citizen, and support for the beneficiary will be suspended. From 1 July 2025, the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE) plans to conduct audits to verify compliance with Emiratisation requirements.

## ABU DHABI

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY



The Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) has issued Abu Dhabi Resolution No. 4/2025 in order to regulate the approval and registration of environmental consultancy offices (ECOs) within the emirate. This resolution covers activities related to environmental consulting, studies, and research. It will impact all ECOs operating in Abu Dhabi, including both those which existing before it was issued and consultancies licensed subsequently. Offices which offer environmental consulting as part of broader activities will also be impacted.. ECOs will need to be certified and registered by EAD in order to renew or amend their licences and permits. It applies to offices whose activities are solely environmental consulting or part of broader activities. In order to gain approval, office directors will have to hold relevant academic qualifications and have practical experience. The ECO must also maintain a qualified technical team, be equipped with modern tools, and operate from a licensed physical headquarters within the emirate.

## DUBAI

### DIGITAL ASSET FIRMS



Dubai's Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (VARA) has issued a directive requiring licensed digital asset companies to comply with updated activity-based Rulebooks by 19 June 2025 following the release of Version 2.0 on 19 May 2025. This update aims to strengthen market integrity and risk oversight by refining controls around margin trading and token distribution services, harmonising compliance requirements, and clarifying definitions for collateral wallet arrangements. The updated Rulebooks will enhance supervisory mechanisms across various regulated activities, including advisory, broker-dealer, custody, exchange, lending and borrowing, virtual asset management and investment, and VA transfer and settlement services. Key operational terms such as 'client assets', 'qualified custodians', and 'collateral requirements' have now been defined.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### DATA PROTECTION



A consultation has been issued in Saudi Arabia on proposed changes to the Implementing Regulations of the Personal Data Protection Law (Saudi Arabia Administrative Decision No. 1516/1445). The proposed changes include a range of areas including changes to the way privacy policies are drafted so they are easy to understand and use straightforward language that takes into account the varying levels of understanding of impacted individuals. The language of the privacy policy should also match the language typically used in the provision of the services or products to individuals. There are also significant changes proposed to the rules on consent before sending advertising or awareness materials, and for processing for marketing. There is also a proposal to removing the previous 90-day limit for submitting complaints, which would allow data subjects to file complaints at any time.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



The Saudi Ministry of Human Resources has issued new labour regulations prohibiting questions related to personal freedoms during job interviews. Job interviews and announcements will have to be free from discrimination based on gender, disability, age, and marital status. Employers will have to inform job applicants of interview details at least three working days in advance, whether the interview is in-person or remote. The interview venue will also need to comply with health and safety regulations, including having adequate seating, visible entrances and exits, and gender-specific restrooms.

In addition, job vacancy announcements must align with the Saudi Unified Occupational Classification and be posted on official digital platforms or at licensed employment fairs. The announcements must include comprehensive details such as the company name, activity, office location, job description, required qualifications, work hours, benefits, and application procedures.

## QATAR

### BORDER CROSSING



A pre-registration service on the Metrash app has been introduced for those using the Abu Samra border. The optional feature will enable Qatari citizens and residents to efficiently complete their travel procedures and reduce wait times by pre-registering their travel details via the Metrash app. This is done by selecting the Travel icon on the Metrash app and choosing the Pre Registration at Abu Samra Port option. They must fill in necessary data, including specifying entry or exit, selecting the date, choosing the vehicle and driver, add passengers, and proceed to the next step. Once completed, a text message confirms the registration, allowing travellers to use the pre-registration lane and avoid queues in regular lanes.

## KUWAIT

### CRYPTOCURRENCY MINING



The Public Prosecution in Kuwait has announced it has begun to investigate 31 cases which involved the unauthorised use



of electricity for cryptocurrency mining in residential properties there. The unauthorised use of the electricity for crypto mining has reportedly caused damage to the power grid. It has been stressed that residential electricity supplies must be used solely for their intended purposes. There has been a warning that strict legal measures will be taken against violations of this type.

## FREEZONE BUILDINGS



The Kuwaiti Municipal Council Technical Committee has approved amendments to the building regulations for the Free Zone, which was previously known as the Shuwaikh and Al-Rai Service and Craft Commercial Area. The regulations impact government agencies, businesses, and developers operating within the Free Zone, and provide a legal framework for construction and land use there. The revised regulations permit a total building area of up to 130% of the plot size, distributed over three floors - ground, mezzanine, and first floor. A basement can also be constructed with a building area of up to 100% for commercial activities, parking, or storage, subject to specific regulations. In addition, the ground floor can be used for offices, shops, or showrooms with a minimum area of 100 square metres. The mezzanine can be used for offices connected to the ground floor, which must follow precise engineering requirements. Permitted activities in the area include administrative offices, shops, showrooms, banking services, health clubs, and hotels with a minimum area of 10,000 square metres. Complementary activities, such as restaurants and cafes, will also be allowed to operate on up to 10% of the plot area.

### OMAN

## BUSINESS START UPS



The Omani Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP) has stated that foreign investors, including expatriates in the country, will be able to apply for a commercial register in order to start up a business, but certain conditions will apply. These conditions include the mandatory employment of at least one Omani citizen one year after the business has been established. However, domestic workers and similar types of workers will not

be able to open a commercial register. Expatriates who are subject to an employment contract with either a government or private sector employer will be able to establish a company subject to Oman Sultani Decree No. 50/2019 with approval, or if their employment contract is terminated or a transfer pledge is made.

## FILLING STATIONS



Oman Ministerial Decision No. 142/2025 On the Issuance of the Regulation of the Conditions and Controls for Issuing Licenses to Establish and Operate Fuel Filling Stations has been issued and covers the conditions and controls for issuing filling station licenses in Oman. The new Ministerial Decision has set out comprehensive organisational guidelines which will apply to all business entities and applicants in the fuel sector who are looking to set up or operate a filling station. The law has introduced a framework which will impose stringent technical, safety, and administrative obligations on licence applicants.

### BAHRAIN

## BUILDING FREEZE



The Bahraini Parliament has passed measures which will cap the freeze on building permits there at one year. The move follows previous cases where landowners had to wait over a decade in order to build on or sell land which they owned. These issues were caused because the land had either been marked for expropriation or the area had not yet been classified. As a result of this change the planning authorities will be required to complete or revise area plans within 12 months.

In addition, once plans have been approved it will be necessary for them to be implemented without any delay.

### EGYPT

## SIMPLER LICENSING



The Egyptian General Authority for Investment and Free Zones has launching a new unified electronic licensing platform. The new service will provide investors in various economic sectors, with a single place where they can connect with

## REGULATORY ROUND-UP

**Saudi Arabia:** The Royal Commission for Riyadh City has stated as stated it is developing an electronic platform to enable citizens to submit land use applications directly to it, without needing to use intermediaries...

**Ajman:** A new real estate contributions law Ajman Law No. 1/1025 has been issued...

**Oman:** Oman Sultani Decree 40/2025, has issued a Category 1 license for the Satellite Communications Technologies Company to establish and operate a satellite communications system to provide fixed public communication services....

**Saudi Arabia:** Saudi Arabia Decision No. 3664/1446 has been issued on the licensing requirements for different natural gas activities...

**Dubai:** Golden visa applications must be lodged through the Dubai Development Authority's electronic portal - AXS...

**Saudi Arabia:** Expatriates can now update their passport details through their employers' Absher account...

**UAE:** A Public Clarification VAT P041 on the use of SWIFT messages by financial institutions to cover requirements to issue tax invoices for VAT purposes has been issued...

**Bahrain:** New commercial buildings in the Southern Governant may need a fixed space for rubbish containers within each property...

**Kuwait:** Kuwait has broadened its electronic visa criteria for those residing in other GCC countries although criteria including having a valid GCC residency of over six months apply...

**Kuwait:** Kuwait has broadened electronic visa criteria for those residing in other GCC countries with criteria including having a valid GCC residency of over six months apply...

**UAE:** There is to be a waiver of administrative penalties for corporate taxpayers and certain exempt persons who have failed to submit their tax registration applications within the required timeframe.

**Dubai:** Travellers entering Dubai must now follow a new health protocol under a new Public Health Law (Dubai Law No. 5/2025)...

**Bahrain:** Amendments to Article 264 of Bahrain Decree-Law No. 21/2001 on shareholders' voting rights have been considered by the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee...

the authorities and will also reduce the number of procedures which are required to start business activities in Egypt. For example, previously 22 procedures had to be taken to establish a business in the textile industry and this has now been reduced to eight.

# LAW MONITOR

## RECENT LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GCC

### SAUDI ARABIA - AI



Saudi Arabia's Communications, Space, and Technology Commission (CST) has launched a public consultation on a draft Global AI Hub Law. The Global AI Hub Law, is a strategic initiative designed to enhance Saudi's status as a global leader in artificial intelligence and digital infrastructure. The aim is to create a legislative environment which is conducive to attracting foreign investment in advanced technologies, particularly sovereign data centres and AI services. The draft law includes three hosting regulation models—Private, Extended, and Virtual Centres—and targets foreign governments, international tech companies, and foreign investors. The consultation, has been scheduled to end 14 May 2025.

### UAE - INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY



Cabinet Decision No. 36/2025 On the Formation and Work System of the Industrial Property Grievance Committee has been issued. This committee will consider grievances which result from rulings under Federal Law No. 11/2021 On the Regulation and Protection of Industrial Property Rights. The committee will hold sessions at least twice a year. Grievance will have to be filed with it within 60 working days from the date of the relevant person is notified of a decision which has been issued.

### GAZETTE WATCH

**UAE Official Gazette No. 796-798 Annex 1** – These gazettes include Cabinet Decision No. 38/2025 which amends Cabinet Decision No. 23/2006 on Civil Aviation fees for operations and navigation.

**Saudi Arabia Official Gazettes No. 5076-5087** – These gazettes include Saudi Arabia Ministerial Decision No. 1086/1446 the Investment Law Implementing Regulations.

**Qatar Official Gazettes No. 8-12** – These gazettes include Qatar Cabinet Decision No. 9/2025 which amends some provisions in Qatar Cabinet Decision No. 8/2019 on the committee for regulating non-Qatari's use and ownership of real estate.

**Kuwait Official Gazettes No. 1730-No. 1739** – These gazettes include Kuwait Ministerial Decision No. 678/2025 on or using modern scientific methods in granting, withdrawing, losing or revoking Kuwaiti citizenship.

**Bahrain Official Gazettes No. 3805-3811** – These gazettes include Bahrain Law No. 15/2025 amending Article 20 of Bahrain Law No. 8/2009 on combating smoking and tobacco of all kinds.

**Oman Official Gazettes No. 1590-1597** – These gazettes include Oman Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Decision No. 1152/2/30/2025-8. regulating the billing system.

(Source: Lexis Middle East Law)

### QATAR - PROPERTY



Amendments have been made to Qatar Law No. 8/2022 On Expropriation and Temporary take-over of Properties for Public Benefit. As a result of Qatar Cabinet Decision No. 14/2025 there has been an addition of public benefit works to the works stipulated in Qatar Law No. 8/2022.

### KUWAIT - CRIME



The Kuwait Council of Ministers has approved amendments to the Penal Code (Kuwait Law No. 16/1960) and Criminal Procedure Code (Kuwait Law No. 17/1960). Among the areas impacted is insolvency. As a result, there will be amendments to Article 5 of Kuwait Law No. 71/2020 on Bankruptcy, reinstating arrest and detention for debtors who evade financial obligations and enhancing enforcement authority for financial disclosures.

## FEATURED DEVELOPMENT

Lara Barbary, Partner, BSA Law explains how the more integrated approach to the economy brought in by Dubai Executive Council Decision No. 11/2025 will impact free zone entities.

Dubai Executive Council Decision No. 11/2025 Concerning the Regulation of Free Zone Entities Operation of Their Activities Within the Emirate of Dubai is evidence of a significant policy shift there. For many years the Dubai free zones have played a significant part in the Emirate's foreign investment strategy, offering advantages such as 100% foreign ownership, tax incentives, and streamlined customs procedures. However, limitations on the operation of these companies outside free zone boundaries have sometimes constrained their growth. Dubai Executive Council Decision No. 11/2025 enables companies licensed in Dubai's free zones to legally conduct business outside their designated zones, by obtaining an appropriate license or permit from the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET). It effectively removes this barrier, introducing a new level of operational flexibility which should broaden market access and make doing business across Dubai much easier. However, it is important to note Dubai Executive Council Decision No. 11/2025 does not apply to financial entities licensed to operate in the DIFC. Under Article 4 of Dubai Executive Council Decision No. 11/2025 three types of licenses or permits are available. These are a license to establish a branch within the Emirate: which enables free zone entities to open and operate branches in mainland Dubai, subject to DET conditions and approvals. There is also a licence to establish a branch with its headquarters within a free zone. In

addition, permits will be available which allow free zone entities to carry out specified activities in mainland Dubai on a temporary basis for not more than six months. This option will support short-term commercial engagements without requiring a full branch license. Along with the Licensing Authority, DET will issue a list of economic activities that free zone establishments may carry out within the Emirate. This list, will be published within six months of the date the Decision comes into force and will specify permissible activities under this new regulatory framework. Under Article 8 of Dubai Executive Council Decision No. 11/2025, Free Zone entities licensed to operate within Dubai will be able to continue to employ staff sponsored under the free zone regime, and retain benefits and regulatory framework applicable to free zone employment. This clarifies the position on the status of free zone entity's workers when they engage in mainland activities. In addition to requiring the relevant license or permit free zone entities looking to benefit from this new regime will also have to maintain separate financial records for activities they conduct within mainland Dubai to ensure regulatory and tax compliance. They will also have to comply with all relevant federal and local laws governing those activities. Finally, existing free zone entities operating outside their designated zones will have to regularise their status within one year from the date Dubai Executive Council Decision No. 11/2025 comes into force.

## BAHRAIN - CHEQUES



The Shura Council has put forward proposals which to amend the Commercial Law (Bahrain Decree-Law No. 7/1987). A key change would be changes to the way banks would deal with bounced cheques. Partial cheque payments would be allowed. Cheque holders would be able to collect part of the cheque amount if the full balance was unavailable, and would also have the option to re-present the cheque for the remaining amount. Banks would be required to honour cheques fully or partially when funds were available and would not be able to refuse payment if requested by the account holder or cheque bearer.

## OMAN - PUBLIC HEALTH



A new public health law Oman Sultani Decree No. 43/2025 has been issued in Oman, Chapter 4 of Omani Sultani Decree No. 43/2025 covers food, occupational, and environmental health, setting policies and strategies for promoting healthy and therapeutic nutrition and establishing standard specifications for food manufacturing. Although this law came into force on the day it was issued in the Official Gazette various public bodies are to be tasked with implementing this law and will issue regulations and decisions to do this in their particular capacities. Until they do this existing regulations will remain in force.

# TAX AND FINANCE ROUND-UP

COVERING RECENT KEY TAX AND  
FINANCE DEVELOPMENTS – REGION-WIDE

UAE

## NON-RESIDENT INVESTORS



Cabinet Decision No. 35/2025 has been issued which covers non-resident investors in Qualifying Investment Funds and Real Estate Investment Trusts. This law outlines the conditions under which non-resident juridical investors in Qualifying Investment Funds (QIF) or Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) are deemed to have a nexus in the UAE, which therefore means they are subject to taxation. It has repealed Cabinet Decision No. 56/2023 and follows on from Cabinet Decision No. 34/2026 On Qualifying Investment Funds and Qualifying Limited Partnerships for the Purposes of Federal Decree-Law No. 47/2022 on the Taxation of Corporations and Businesses. It impacts non-resident juridical investors in QIFs and REITs, and states a taxable nexus arises if a QIF or REIT distributes 80% or more of its income within nine months from its financial year-end, either on the date of dividend distribution or the date the ownership interest is acquired. A nexus will also be created if a QIF fails to meet diversity of ownership conditions during the tax period. However, non-resident investors who are exclusively investing in QIFs and REITs without breaching these conditions will not be considered to have a taxable presence in the UAE.

## PILLAR 2 CONFIRMATION



The UAE Ministry of Finance has announced its formal adoption of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) guidance on the Global Anti-Base Erosion (GloBE) Rules, also known as Pillar Two through Ministerial Decision No. 88/2025. The Ministry has stated that the newly adopted Ministerial Decision incorporates all administrative guidance and relevant commentary released by the OECD up to January 2025. They believe this alignment will ultimately reduce the compliance burden on multinational corporations operating in the UAE which fall under the scope of these rules.

## QUALIFYING INVESTMENT FUNDS



Cabinet Decision No. 34/2025 On Qualifying Investment Funds and Qualifying Limited Partnerships for the Purposes of Federal Decree-Law No. 47/2022 on the Taxation of Corporations and Businesses has been issued explaining how the tax exemptions which may apply to qualifying investment funds work. The Cabinet Decision begins by explaining the standard conditions in addition to those under Article 10(1) of Federal Decree-Law No. 47/2022 which apply for a regular investment fund to be exempt from corporate tax as a qualifying investment fund. These standard conditions do not automatically apply to Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) and specific conditions which must be met in order for them to apply for an exemption are detailed in Article 4 of Cabinet Decision No. 34/2025. A Qualifying Limited Partnership can also apply to the Authority to be exempt from Corporate Tax where the principal Business or Business Activities conducted by the Qualifying Limited Partnership are Investment Business, and any other Business or Business Activities conducted by the Qualifying Limited Partnership are ancillary or incidental to the Investment Business. The Qualifying Limited Partnership must not derive any income from a right in rem, sale, disposal, assignment of rights in them, direct use, letting, including subletting and any other form of exploitation of Immovable Property located in the State; and the main or principal purpose of the Qualifying Limited Partnership should not be to avoid Corporate Tax. An unincorporated Partnership which is treated as a Taxable Person in its own right in line with Article 16(8) of Federal Decree-Law No. 47/2022 will be considered an entity under the definition of a Qualifying Investment Fund. An Unincorporated Partnership can apply to the Authority to be exempt from Corporate Tax as a Qualifying Investment Fund, if all the relevant conditions specified in Federal Decree-Law No. 47/2022 and Cabinet Decision No. 34/2025 have been met.

ADGM

## PRUDENTIAL FRAMEWORK FOR LOWER-RISK FIRMS



The Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) in the ADGM has issued a consultation paper proposing amendments to the prudential framework for lower-risk firms. Consultation Paper No. 2/2025, targets Authorised Persons in Categories 2, 3A, 3B, 3C, and 4, as well as potential applicants and professional advisors. It has been proposed the Expenditure Based Capital Minimum (EBCM) requirement for Category 4 firms not holding Client Assets or Insurance Money should be removed, while increasing the Base Capital Requirement (BCR) for most Category 4 firms to \$50,000. The FSRA has also suggested applying a BCR of \$250,000 for Providing Custody for a Fund, unless it is a Public Fund, and removing the Internal Risk Assessment Process (IRAP) reporting requirement for Category 3B and 3C firms. There is also a proposal to eliminate the professional indemnity insurance (PII) requirement for Branches of Category 3B, 3C, and 4 firms. It is hoped the proposed changes will reduce the regulatory burden for these firms and better reflect the lower prudential risks associated with them. The closing date for comments on these proposals is 21 May 2025. The proposed amendments would modify the current prudential requirements under the FSRA's Prudential – Investment, Insurance Intermediation, and Banking Rulebook (PRU).

## VIRTUAL ASSET OFFENCES




Substantial penalties have been levied against Hayvn Group of Companies, its former CEO, and related entities for serious regulatory breaches and misconduct in the ADGM. The Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) conducted an investigation which revealed unauthorised virtual asset activities and the provision of false information by the companies. The FSRA cancelled their ADGM Financial Services



Permission (FSP) licence, imposed fines of \$8.85 million, and indefinitely prohibited them from performing any function in a financial services business within ADGM. Hayn Cayman and AC Holding had carried out significant unlicensed financial services activity involving Virtual Assets in ADGM from around October 2018 to May 2024. Hayn Cayman had routed client transactions involving the conversion of Virtual Assets to fiat currency and vice versa through the accounts held and controlled by AC Holding, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) that was not licensed by the FSRA so was prohibited from conducting any form of financial services activity in the ADGM. Both companies were found to have carried out unlicensed payments and to have been arranging services in relation to Virtual Asset activities in the ADGM.


#### SAUDI ARABIA

### RETT REGULATIONS

 Saudi Arabia Administrative Decision No. 25-03-01/1446 the Implementing Regulation of the Real Estate Transaction Tax (RETT) Law have been issued. A new RETT Law Saudi Arabia Cabinet Decision No. 239/1446 was issued in September 2024 and was due to come into force on 9 April 2025. The Implementing Regulations provide further detail on how this law will work in practice. RETT is a 5% tax on real estate transactions, affecting both individuals and corporate entities who buy, sell, or transfer real estate. The Administrative Decision outlines specific guidelines on various aspects of the tax, including eligibility criteria, calculation methods, compliance requirements, and procedures for disputes and appeals. Parties must register transactions with the authority and comply with the tax payment timelines.

#### OMAN

### SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND FREEZONES

 Oman Sultani Decree No. 38/2025 a new law on special economic zones and freezones in Oman came into effect on 8 April 2025. It has repealed and replaced the previous law

## TAX TREATY UPDATE

**Qatar:** The Norwegian Parliament has approved the Protocol to a Double Taxation Treaty with Qatar.

**Bahrain:** A double taxation treaty has been ratified between Bahrain and the UAE.

**Oman:** Oman has ratified a double taxation treaty with Tanzania which was signed on 15 December 2024.

**Oman:** Oman has ratified a double taxation treaty with Cyprus.


**Oman:** Luxembourg has approved a Double Taxation Treaty between it and Oman, which was concluded in 2024.

**Saudi Arabia:** The Council of Ministers have approved a Double Taxation Treaty approved with Iceland in 2024.

on this subject Oman Sultani Decree No. 56/2002. It creates a unified regulatory framework for special economic zones such as Duqm and free zones, such as Sohar and Salalah). It provides for 10-year corporate tax exemptions and the possibility of longer tax exemptions for certain special activities. It also explains how dedicated Customs departments within Special Economic zones will operate.


#### EGYPT

### SMALL BUSINESS TAX

 The Egyptian Tax Authority, has announced new tax relief measures designed to support small business owners. These measures are part of the government's efforts to simplify tax procedures. Under the current system businesses with annual revenues below EGP 500,000 are subject to a 0.4% tax rate, while those with revenues between EGP 10 million and EGP 20 million face a 1.5% tax rate. The new measures exempt businesses established for less than five years from tax audits, while those operating for over 20 years benefit from tax card advantages and a simplified system. Special incentives will also be provided for small and medium-sized enterprises.

#### LEBANON


### BANKING SECRECY

 Lebanon's parliamentary joint committees has approved amendments to the Banking Secrecy Law (Lebanon Law No. 1/1956) and the Monetary and Credit Law (Lebanon Law

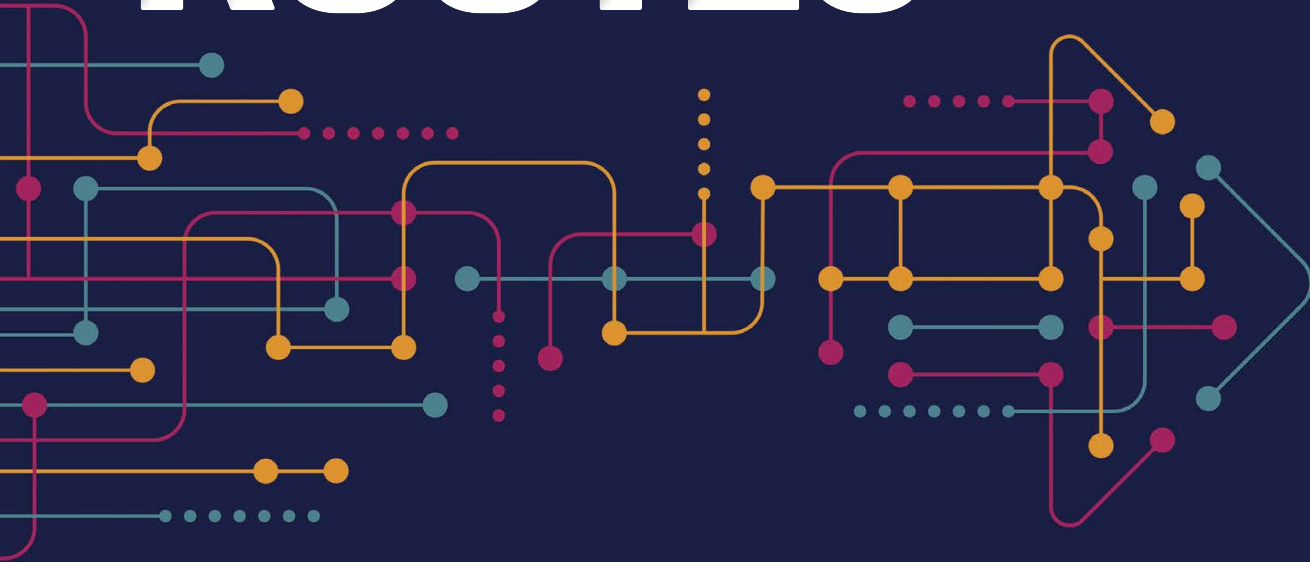
No. 13513/1963). The Vice President of the Lebanese Parliament has stated the amendments would allow the Banking Control Commission to access bank account data, including names, with retroactive effect for the past ten years in order to enhance transparency and accountability, particularly in monitoring financial activities that may involve corrupt politicians who might be trying to hide their assets in accounts under different names. The amendments have also reaffirmed the protection of personal data privacy under Article 8 of Lebanon Law No. 306/2022. On a related area the Lebanese Economy Minister has made a statement on the unfreezing of bank depositors' accounts. The Minister has pledged depositors will gradually regain access to their funds, which have been frozen in the country's banks since the onset of the financial crisis in 2019. It has been stated the process may take time and specific instruments, but the ultimate goal will be to ensure no depositor lose their savings.

#### JORDAN

### NEW PROPERTY TAX LAW PROPOSAL

 The Jordanian Government has proposed a draft property and land tax law which would replace the existing Jordan Law No. 11/1954 property tax law. This new law would introduce electronic tax calculation methods and technical formulas for assessing property taxes, replacing the annual rent-based system. In addition, it would also increase exemptions for vacant properties and allow appeals through a specialist committee.

# NEW DISPUTE ROUTES



A new Investment and Trade Court is due to begin operating in Oman in October 2025. Oliver Stevens, Ali Aideed and Mohammed Al Siyabi of Addleshaw Goddard explain what is currently known about the way it will work in practice.

**T**he Sultanate of Oman has undertaken a landmark judicial reform with the issue of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025, which establishes the Investment and Trade Court. This specialist court is designed to enhance judicial efficiency, increase investor confidence, and streamline the resolution of complex commercial disputes. It forms part of Oman's broader legal modernisation efforts under Vision 2040.

While comparable in ambition to other regional and international specialised commercial courts, such as the DIFC Courts in Dubai, the QICDRC in Qatar, and the Singapore International Commercial Court, Oman's Investment and Trade Court is distinct in its foundation - it operates within the framework of Omani national law rather than common law. With a dual-level structure, exclusive jurisdiction over key commercial and investment matters, and fully digital procedures, the court is introducing a transformative model for commercial dispute resolution in Oman.

On 23 March 2025, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025, formally establishing the Investment and Trade Court. The court is set to become operational on 1 October

2025 and is one of the most ambitious steps in Oman's long-term legal modernisation plan. It reflects a commitment to fostering a robust and attractive business environment in Oman, aligned with global best practices in commercial dispute resolution. By introducing a specialised court dedicated to commercial and investment matters, Oman aims to expedite proceedings, enhance predictability and certainty, and attract further foreign investment.













## ESTABLISHMENT AND STRUCTURE

The Investment and Trade Court is affiliated with the Supreme Judicial Council and is headquartered in Muscat, with potential for future circuits across Oman (see Article 1 and 3 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025). It features both trial and appellate levels. Judges will be appointed from among the judges serving in the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, and Primary Courts, upon secondment approved by the Supreme Judicial Council (see Article 4 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025), which will ensure a high level of experience and subject-matter expertise.

Claims not exceeding 100,000 Rials (approximately USD 260,000) will be heard by single-judge panels, while three-judge panels will adjudicate claims

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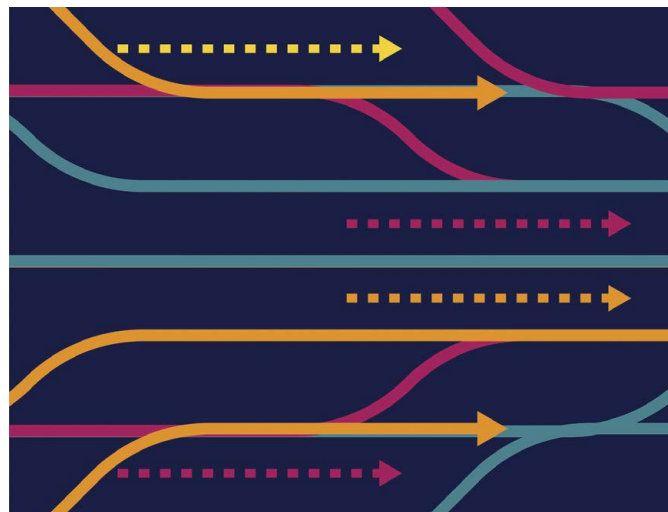
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threshold or unquantified matters (Article 12 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025). There will be an internal appellate division, with further recourse to the Supreme Court's Commercial Chamber (see Article 15–17 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025). This hierarchical structure will ensure consistency while also promoting efficiency and accessibility.

### **RATIONALE AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

The creation of the Investment and Trade Court is part of Oman's broader judicial reform efforts under Vision 2040. The key objectives include enhancing the efficiency of the dispute resolution process, increasing specialisation in commercial litigation, as well as boosting investor confidence through legal certainty and enforceability. It is also hoped the new court will reduce caseloads in general civil courts by diverting complex commercial matters to a specialised bench.

Importantly, Article 18-36 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025 establish detailed electronic procedures including mandatory electronic filing, service, and case management to help ensure justice is done as swiftly and transparently as possible. These include strict timelines for pleadings, judgments, and enforcement, reducing the delays that often plague commercial litigation in conventional settings.

### **JURISDICTION AND SCOPE**

Article 11 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025 outlines the court's exclusive jurisdiction, which includes all disputes where one party is a trader acting in the course of their business or where the dispute arises from an investment contract. Key areas covered include:

- disputes arising among partners, shareholders, or between any of these and the company, including public joint-stock companies whose shares are publicly traded - Article 11(1) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025;
- commercial assets and movable property - Article 11(2) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025;
- foreign investment and economic activity -



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Associate  
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Article 11(3) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025;

- maritime trade and shipping contracts - Article 11(4) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025;
- disputes relating to banking operations, financial papers, financing companies, investment companies, and insurance companies, but excluding claims arising from motor vehicle accidents (Article 11(5) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025);
- bankruptcy and preventive settlement proceedings - Article 11(6) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025;
- arbitration-related applications, including enforcement of awards - Article 11(7) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025;
- intellectual property matters such as trademarks, patents, and trade secrets - Article 11(8) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025;
- disputes related to competition protection, prevention of monopolistic practices, and combating practices harmful to national products in international trade - Article 11(9) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025;
- disputes arising from e-commerce - Article 11(10) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025; and
- PPP (Public-Private Partnership) contracts - Article 11(11) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025.

The court expressly does not hear administrative, labour, or tenancy disputes, which will continue to be handled by the specialist circuits of the conventional courts.

### **MODERNISED PROCEDURES AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

One of the defining innovations of the court is its commitment to digitisation. The entire litigation process—from claim submission to judgment execution—is designed to be handled electronically.

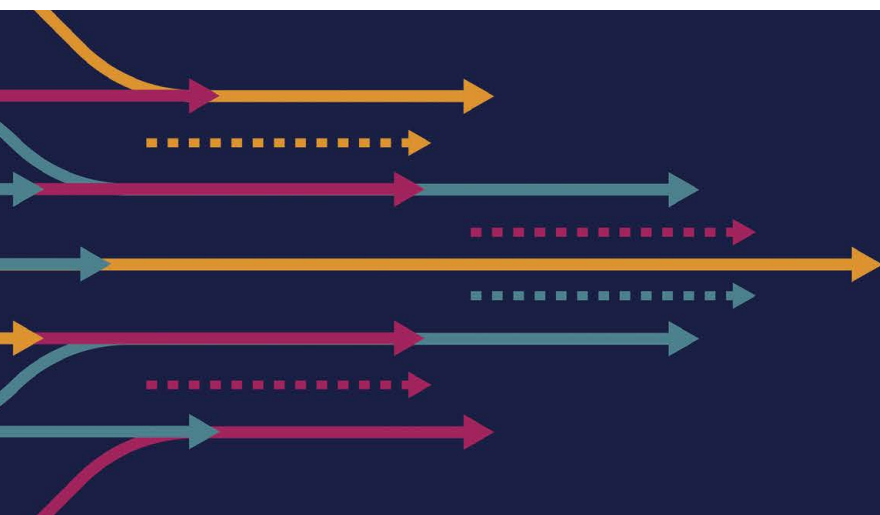
### **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

#### **Article 17 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025**

An appeal may be filed against the judgments issued by the appeal circuits in the court before the Commercial Circuit of the Supreme Court. The appeal period for these judgments shall be 30 days. The commencement of the time-limit for the appeal and other procedures shall follow the provisions stated in the Civil and Commercial Procedure Law.

(Source: Lexis Middle East Law)





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Highlights include:

- e-filing of claims and documents - Article 18 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025; and
- electronic service using addresses from civil and commercial registries - Article 20 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025.

In addition, the Case Preparation Office must complete initial case preparation within three business days from electronic filing, verifying fee payments and completeness of required documentation (see Article 22 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025). There are tight deadlines for pleadings as defendants must respond within 15 days (see Article 24 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025), and the courts must issue judgments within 90 days, which is extendable by 45 days only with justification (see Article 28 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025). In addition, hearings, including testimony from parties, witnesses, and experts, may be conducted remotely via electronic video conferencing, subject to identity verification by the court (see Article 29 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025). Expert reports can also be filed and contested electronically (see Article 30–31 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025) and enforcement is supervised by a dedicated judge whose decisions will be final (see Article 35 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025).

## NEXT STEPS

Law firms, in-house legal teams, and business leaders must now take proactive steps to align their contracts and strategies with this new judicial structure.

Key actions should include updating dispute resolution clauses to reference the Investment and Trade Court where applicable. Arbitration clauses, should also be revisited especially in light of the court's jurisdiction over arbitration-related enforcement (see Article 11(7) of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025).

It will also be important to ensure consistency between registered and contractual addresses to support electronic service (Article 20 of Oman Sultani

## CASE PREPARATION OFFICE WORK

### First Steps

Within a period of not more than three working days from the date the law suit is electronically registered the Case Preparation Office will verify the payment of fees, initiate the case preparation procedures, and ensure all necessary documents for adjudicating the case are complete.

### Checks

This will include verifying the accuracy of the names and details of the parties and their addresses, ensuring all documents mentioned in the initiatory pleading are provided along with Arabic translations if they are in a foreign language, and providing the names, details, and addresses of witnesses if required.

### Non-payment of fees and deficiencies

If prescribed fees are not paid, or there are any deficiencies in the required documents or data, the Case Preparation Office will notify the plaintiff electronically to complete the missing items within a period of not more than ten working days from the notification date, or the lawsuit will be considered null and void.



**Ali Aideed**  
Legal Specialist  
Addleshaw Goddard

Decree No. 35/2025). Internal legal processes should be streamlined to comply with the court's rigid procedural timelines and digital platform. It will also be necessary to prepare for the shorter appeal windows – 15 days for standard appeals and seven days for urgent matters (see Article 16 of Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025) which will require swift internal decision-making. The new court is scheduled to begin operations on 1 October 2025. Practitioners must closely monitor announcements in the Official Gazette and Supreme Judicial Council's official communications for new procedural regulations. Oman Sultani Decree No. 35/2025 is a transformative milestone in Oman's legal reform journey. Although it is obviously too early to say how the Investment and Trade Court will work in practice, early adaptation to this new framework will be key.

# CASE FOCUS

**Case No** .... Ibrahim Al Nasr v Nexus Financial Services WLL QFC 0032/2024, [2025] QIC (F) 15 issued on 4 March 2025

**Jurisdiction** .... QFC

**Court** .... QFC Court of First Instance

**Recommended by** .... Mohammed Al-Ansari, QICDRC

## WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

There were recently judgments in two related cases in the QFC Court of First Instance - Ibrahim Al Nasr v Nexus Financial Services WLL [2025] QIC (F) 15 and Ali Al Maadeed v Nexus Financial Services WLL [2025] QIC (F) 16. Both these cases involved claims of investment mismanagement and breach of contract. The Court dismissed them, highlighting the complexities of financial insurance brokerage arrangements and the importance of evidence in investment disputes. Both the Claimants, were Qatari nationals who worked in the public sector and the disputes arose from their respective investments which had been made through Nexus Financial Services WLL which was a QFC-registered insurance mediation firm. Their claims included for refunds of their investments: plus interest at 9% per annum from 2019; additional amounts which represented unpaid quarterly returns, estimated at 11% per annum over five years; compensation of \$10,000,000 for lost profits and damages; and their legal costs. The two cases were tried separately, but the facts and circumstances of each one was almost identical. They involved the nature of the agreements between the Claimants and the Defendant, the obligations of a financial intermediary, and the Claimants' own investment decisions. The two investors argued that Nexus, through a former employee Mr Rudolfs Veiss, had misrepresented investment risks and failed to ensure promised returns. However, the Court found that both investors had completed financial health checks, confirming their risk tolerance; signed 'Suitability Reports', explicitly rejecting Nexus's investment recommendations in favour of alternative funds; and received policy documentation from Old Mutual International (later renamed Utmost), outlining investment risks.

A key point was whether Nexus had remained responsible even after Mr Veiss left the firm in 2020

and the investments had been transferred to another broker.

## WHAT WAS DECIDED?

The Court found the Defendant had ceased to be the responsible intermediary following the Claimants' direct dealings with the new insurer and subsequent broker changes in 2020. It was noted there was a lack of evidence to substantiate misrepresentation or mismanagement claims and breach of contract. The Court took the view it was significant that the Claimants had refused to obtain crucial investment records from the new insurer, despite requests for these from both Nexus and the Court. Nexus had tried to obtain the information from the insurer but this had been refused as they were no longer the investors' broker. This was particularly important in this case as the investments could conceivably have been worth more or substantially more than they were when commenced with Nexus, so the Claimants could not prove the losses they had tried to claim. There were also expressly-worded risk disclaimers in the investment documentation and the Claimants were unable to prove any breach by the Defendant of any of the contractual provisions (particularly in a situation in which the value of the investments as at the date of the claim was unknown).

Another important point was that the transfer of brokerage responsibilities to the other entity in 2020, had not been done by Nexus which had absolved their ongoing obligations. As this transfer was not done by them they could not be held responsible for things such as the alleged breach of privacy the Claimants had tried to argue as they alleged Nexus had passed their confidential information to the new insurer.

There was also a lack of direct evidence from either Claimant on their dealings with Mr Veiss, as each of them had testified in the other's case rather than in their own. The Court criticised this procedural approach, noting the 'unresolved mystery' of why the Claimants did not testify in their own cases which had weakened their credibility. In short, no breach or loss was proven, no causation was proven and the claims were dismissed with costs.

## WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT?

Courts will hold investors accountable for their decisions when clear risk disclosures and signed agreements exist. Some investments are inherently risky, and investors should know that their investments might not lead to the results they were hoping for. However, another important lesson learnt in this case was on the importance of evidence. If a Claimant makes allegations of mismanagement against their investment broker, the Claimant must provide cogent evidence to support this. Investors must also be mindful of the limits of their broker's liability – financial intermediaries are generally not liable once a client has formally transferred their investment to another brokerage.

These two cases highlight the necessity for investors to fully understand their financial agreements and maintain clear documentation when entering investment arrangements. For financial services providers, these cases show the importance of maintaining thorough client records and ensuring clear risk disclosures to protect against future liability.

**Case No ....** Mohamed Noweih Wangsa v Ginger Camel LLC [2025] QIC (F) 11 issued on 23 February 2025

**Jurisdiction ....** QICDRC

**Court ....** QICDRC, Court of First Instance

**Recommended by ....** Muna Nasser AlKaabi, Case Progression Officer, QICDRC

## WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The Claimant, Mohamed Noweih Wangsa, was a former employee of the Defendant, Ginger Camel LLC. The Claimant initially brought a claim against the Defendant for breach of his employment contract, alleging unpaid salaries which amounted to QAR 180,700. This was resolved through a Compromise Agreement. The Compromise Agreement provided the Defendant would pay the Claimant the outstanding amounts in instalments. This meant the Defendant had committed to make an initial payment of QAR 15,000, followed by 16 instalments of QAR 6,689 until full settlement. The initial amount was not paid when due and the Claimant wrote to the Defendant requesting it. The Claimant received assurances that the payments would be made but no such payment was received. The first scheduled instalment under the settlement agreement was also missed. As a result, the Claimant issued proceedings against the Defendant due to the breach of the Compromise Agreement. As an alternative they had asked to reopen the original case which had been stayed or settled on the basis of the compromise agreement.

Although the Defendant did not dispute the existence of the Compromise Agreement, they argued that the delays in payment were due to the Claimant's misconduct, which they claimed had included withholding a company laptop and deleting

crucial financial records. The Defendant then raised a counterclaim based on these allegations. The Claimant denied the allegations and asserted that all company property had been fully returned and had been untampered with. They stated these allegations were unsupported. No further evidence was submitted by either party in support of the allegations regarding the deletion of financial records or the harm the Defendant claimed to have suffered.

## WHAT WAS DECIDED?

The Court found that the Defendant had breached the Compromise Agreement by failing to make the initial and first periodic payments on the agreed dates, and by not remedying the default within seven days, as was required under the agreement.

Clause 5B of the Compromise Agreement entitled the Claimant to demand full and immediate payment of the outstanding amount (which was QAR 107,024) upon defaulting on two consecutive instalments.

The Court noted the absence of evidence supporting the Defendant's allegations of deleting the crucial data and dismissed the Defendant's unevicenced counterclaim for damages. Due to the breach of the Compromise Agreement the Claimant was entitled to pursue the legal remedies specified in the Compromise Agreement including filing a claim for the outstanding balance, as well as any legal fees, and associated expenses incurred as a result of the default. The Court ordered the Defendant to pay the Claimant QAR 107,024 along with interest at the rate of 5% (QAR 14.66 per day) until full payment.

The Claimant was also entitled to any legal costs incurred in bringing his claim. The Court also refused to reopen the earlier case (CTFIC0044/2024), which was settled or stayed as a result of the Compromise Agreement.

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

This case underscores the Court's firm approach to enforcing settlement agreements. It was not possible to reopen the original case which had been stayed or settled as a result of the agreement.

The Claimant had the right to pursue legal remedies provided for by the Compromise Agreement, including filing a claim for the full outstanding balance and all legal fees and associated expenses in the case of legal action arising from its default.

This stresses that settlement agreements must be approached with finality (see for example *Fayza Ibrahim Abdullatif v Reliable News Network Worldwide LLC* [2025] QIC (F)).

This approach incentivises alternative dispute resolution and avoids undermining the value of settlement agreements.

The Court has a role in safeguarding the efficacy of settlement agreements, and refused to reopen the prior settled case, as settlement agreements are not subject to judicial supervision absent a breach.





# ***JAMESON LEGAL SALARY GUIDE AND MARKET UPDATE 2025***

We are delighted to announce that the 2025 edition of the Jameson Legal Salary Guide and Market Update has been launched.

Our team's combined experience and deep connections provide great insight into the global legal markets from a private practice, in-house, risk and compliance, and legal tech perspective.

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# IN-HOUSE PROFILE

## LEGAL ASSOCIATE – BANKING AND FINANCE



### Rising star

Rahaf Saad explains how her work as a Junior Legal Associate at Alinma Bank has given her the opportunity to work on strategic deals and regulatory compliance initiatives that helped her win the LexisNexis rising star award.

#### YOUR BACKGROUND

I have a First-Class Honours Bachelor of Laws from Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University. My thesis on how law was impacting third sector entities in Saudi Arabia honed my research skills and taught me the value of precision and purpose in legal drafting. This passion for public interest law and regulation led to me entering the Scientific Research Competition for Governance, and winning first prize for research on the Impact of the Real Estate Brokerage Law on the Governance of the Real Estate Sector. I was selected for the Young Legal Leaders Programme, and was introduced to mentors from across the legal profession. I also undertook a number of interesting internships including but not limited to work with a specialist litigation firm where I helped restructure debt and prepare cases, drafting legislative proposals and supporting the development of new Saudi Premium Residency products at the Premium Residency Centre and worked on large-scale regulatory reform projects related to Vision 2030 with AS&H Clifford Chance.

#### YOUR ROLE

I am now a Legal Associate at Alinma Bank - one of Saudi Arabia's leading Shariah-compliant financial institutions. As a junior inhouse lawyer, no two days are the same. Alinma is a listed financial institution, which operates under both the Saudi Central Bank and the Capital Market Authority. My legal work spans banking, finance, corporate governance, and capital markets which each have their own pace and complexity. I provide legal support across departments, help structure deals, review transactions, and ensure regulatory compliance. Working in a bank is fast paced, so, I have learnt to be responsive, solution oriented, and available. Alinma Bank was founded in 2006, and has become a major player in the financial sector with SAR 25 billion in authorised capital. What sets it apart is innovation and transparency, all of which is grounded in Islamic finance principles. It is an ecosystem which touches nearly every part of the Saudi economy. Our legal team is continually exposed to diverse, high-impact work, ranging from complex sukuk issuances and finance deals to capital markets compliance and corporate governance matters. I led the implementation of the Personal Data Protection Law (Saudi Arabia Cabinet Decision No. 98/1443), working closely with the Data Management and Procurement departments on the legal structuring and drafting of two Data Processing



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Agreement (DPA) templates which are now used across the Bank. Alinma Bank recently moved up from 855 to 179 in the global ESC ranking according to the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG). I helped with this by providing our Sustainability Department legal guidance on aligning internal practices with international environmental and social risk standards. Saudi environmental law now mandates impact assessments for major projects. Aligning our practices with international expectations has helped us create a bridge between them and local laws. This is particularly important as Saudi Arabia advances mega-projects like NEOM and the Red Sea developments. It is an area where lawyers can add value not just legally, but ethically and strategically. I work directly under our Chief Legal and Corporate Governance Officer, gaining hands-on mentorship and insight into how strategic legal thinking shapes an institution's direction. I have been able to continue learning and have taken a course on Project Finance with A&O Shearman, gained a Commercial Mediation Certificate from the SCCA Academy and am currently studying for the International Fellowship in Arbitration with CI Arb. Alinma Bank is a launchpad, where I have learnt how to apply legal knowledge to real world problems, navigate high-pressure environments, and work alongside people who care deeply about integrity and innovation.

My aim is to not only understand legal and technical issues but also the commercial logic behind every deal. I work, primarily, under Saudi Arabian law but many of our transactions involve cross border elements. I am especially proud of work I did recently on a strategic acquisition where I drafted and reviewed the Purchase Offers and Share Purchase Agreements (SPAs) in English, and conducted legal reviews of associated corporate documentation. The Chief Legal & Corporate Governance Officer, guided me through the transaction's more complex aspects.

### PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVE



**Imam Qazi**  
Partner  
Foot Anstey

Imam Qazi of Foot Anstey explains the significant changes to Sukuk expected when Shari'a Standard 62 is implemented later this year.

In late 2023, the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Finance Institutions (AAOIFI) released an exposure draft of Shari'a Standard 62, which it intends to implement as part of a wider effort to further enhance Shari'a compliance for Sukuk issuances. At the core of this standard is the obligation on Sukuk originators to effect a total transfer of the Sukuk assets to the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) issuer as part of an 'asset-backed' transaction. This is a radical departure from the current 'asset-based' Sukuk structures which have gained acceptance across global Sukuk markets and is likely to have a significant impact on GCC issuers depending on how the standard is implemented. Following industry consultations, AAOIFI expects the new Standard will come into force later in 2025, and Islamic finance institutions (IFIs) will be given between one to three years to implement the required changes. This is one of the most significant developments in Islamic banking and finance in the last two years. The introduction of AAOIFI Standard 62 appears to be the latest in a line of events which illustrate the continuous debate among stakeholders on the Shari'a compliant status of Sukuk. In 2008, the AAOIFI chair Mufti Taqi Usmani remarked that 85% of global Sukuk were not Shari'a compliant, which led to a range of changes to structures across the industry worldwide. The landmark US East Cameron Partners case then ruled the Sukuk investors under that structure were fully entitled to the underlying assets and not, as previously thought, merely unsecured creditors. Then in the Dana Gas Sukuk case, the originator sought to challenge the Sukuk's validity on Shari'a grounds, sparking uncertainty about the status of purchase undertakings in Sukuk structures. Although the English High Court did uphold the instrument's validity, setting the markets somewhat at ease. In this context AAOIFI Standards have become more significant especially after the Higher Shari'a Authority, an affiliate of the UAE Central Bank, recommended their adoption in the jurisdiction in 2018. Consequently, for IFIs issuing or investing in Sukuk, the instruments' compliance with AAOIFI standards, chiefly AAOIFI Standard 59 (Sale of Debt), became of vital importance. Since then, Sukuk issued or to be held by IFIs in the region have had to meet an asset tangibility ratio of 51% in order to be tradable, and delisting is a requirement and dissolution an option for investors if the ratio falls below 33%. Therefore, investors and IFIs in the region now keep a close eye on AAOIFI Standards. The principle issue being addressed in AAOIFI Standard 62 is the Shari'a requirement of bearing ownership and market risk as a prerequisite to the entitlement to profit. AAOIFI has required under Standard 62 that the underlying Sukuk assets be transferred totally to the SPV issuer, which represents the Sukuk

certificate holders. They take the view that this means the transfer should be legally recognised under local laws; the SPV issuer's right to dispose of the assets should be largely unencumbered; the certificate holders should be entitled to the benefits and exposed to the risks of the underlying assets; and the asset should be moved off the originator's balance sheet. This would radically change the nature of Sukuk from a senior unsecured instrument to something more akin to a securitisation or asset backed instrument with equity-like risks. If the Standard is implemented in its current form, there will potentially be an industry wide challenge. For example, some originators will be uneasy with the prospect of selling key business assets to an SPV to raise funds with the possibility they may be sold to a third party. For sovereign issuers, an issuance in this way could create national security concerns and disincentivise sovereign Sukuk issuances. In addition, depending on the jurisdiction, conducting a total asset transfer may lead to the SPV incurring significant tax liabilities and becoming exposed to various legal and market risks not previously envisaged by investors. Some jurisdictions may also prohibit the total transfer of a local asset to a foreign investor or, with regulated entities, government authority approval may be required prior to the Sukuk issuance. Global investors have invested in Sukuk largely because they operate in a similar way to conventional bonds, which are generally seen as fixed-income, senior unsecured instruments. AAOIFI Standard 62 alters this significantly, and investors not accustomed to the risk profile envisioned by the Standard may not want to invest in these instruments. In addition, as Sukuk issued in compliance with AAOIFI Standard 62 will look quite different to instruments issued today, they may be treated differently for accounting and credit rating purposes. Fitch Ratings has mentioned the Standard may require a more asset focused approach to credit ratings rather than one focused on the issuer's creditworthiness. If repayment of the face value is subject to market risk, such Sukuk may also be rendered unratable under current frameworks. Additionally, IFIs subject to AAOIFI Standards may be restricted from investing in Sukuk which do not adhere to AAOIFI Standard 62 which is bound to decrease liquidity for issuers globally, due to the varying extent to which AAOIFI Standards are adopted in different jurisdictions. Although current Sukuk structures are unlikely to fit neatly into an AAOIFI Standard 62 wrapper, some institutions are developing new types of Sukuk which might. White Lion Food's \$10 million profit participation note programme was issued in conjunction with Cordoba Capital Markets, which they suggest adheres to AAOIFI Standard 62. Although AAOIFI has recently announced changes to the Standard, it is not yet clear what the final version of the Standard will look like. Investors and IFIs will just have to watch and wait in the meantime.

Adnan Shafi of Foot Anstey, contributed to this article.

This transaction stretched my legal thinking and strengthened my aspiration to become an outstanding lawyer who thrives on multidisciplinary challenges. Working in-house at a financial institution

means being part of a legal engine that helps deliver impact on a national scale - it is rewarding to contribute even in a small way to shaping Saudi Arabia's future.

# MOVERS AND SHAKERS

## A ROUND-UP OF THE TOP APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

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### BACK TO WHERE SHE BEGAN

Dr Sairah Narmah-Alqasim has become the head of the employment practice at Pinsent Masons's newly launched office in Riyadh. Sairah who is England and Wales qualified trained at Pinsent Masons over a decade ago but more recently worked at Dentons where she held a number of roles including leading their Saudi Arabian employment practice. In her new position she will advise global



and regional corporate clients on their HR and employment law issues. In the past, she has held prominent dual roles as both senior in-house counsel and Vice Dean of the College of Law at the University of Business & Technology, and was senior in-house counsel and Head of the Law Department at Dar Al-Hekma University. She also spent time as In-house Counsel at HSBC. Her client base has included private and listed companies, ultra-high net worth individuals, family offices as well as sovereign wealth funds.

### THE LAUNCH PAD

Alexander Malahias has joined Akin's Corporate Practice and will co-lead the firm's launch of a Riyadh office which is expected later this year. Akin are currently awaiting the final approval of their application for a license to operate in Saudi Arabia. Until that comes Malahias will be based in Abu Dhabi. He previously worked for White & Case and specialises in advising government entities, sponsors, financial institutions, corporate and creditor clients on project finance transactions across Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the wider Middle East region.



His work includes energy transition projects, large-scale tourism and real estate, oil and gas and petrochemicals, power and utilities and infrastructure. However, he is not the only new joiner

across the wider GCC. She advises on both conventional and Islamic finance matters, including complex financial instruments and structures and guides major transactions. Her practice includes general bank lending, project finance, trade finance, acquisition finance, development and construction, and property finance.

### TAKING THE REINS

The American law firm Paul Hastings LLP which operates in North and South America, Europe and Asia is setting up an Abu Dhabi Office which will be co-led by Dinmukhamed Eshanov and George Kazakov. Both men have joined the firm from White & Case and in their new roles will lead an international team to strengthen the firm's international energy and infrastructure capabilities and complement their existing US practice. Eshanov will be based in Abu Dhabi where he will advise on various project development and construction agreements. While Kazakov will split his time between the Abu Dhabi office and the firm's Europe offices. His focus will include private equity M&A and finance transactions in the infrastructure sector.



Helen has been based in Oman for over 15 years. Prior to joining CMS, she worked as a solicitor in Tokyo and the UK. Ali works in the EPC team with more than 450 energy and climate change lawyers. The CMS Energy and Climate Change practice is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Jay is dual-qualified and has worked in the past in the Middle East, England, Australia and South-East Asia advising on complex disputes in the construction, engineering, infrastructure and energy sectors. His past sector expertise includes projects in more than 27 different jurisdictions including infrastructure projects, oil and gas facilities, chemical and power plants, rail and other transport projects. He has been involved in proceedings subject to ICSID, LCIA, ICC, SIAC, UNCITRAL, SCCA and DIAC rules for international arbitration.

### A FAMILY FOCUS

Three new partners have been announced at Stephenson Harwood in Dubai. The first Jordan Ellis is based in Dubai in the Private Wealth team where he assists high-net worth individuals and families and institutional clients with structuring their investments, international estate and tax planning, family governance and global mobility.



at Akin as Jennifer Riddle has also joined the firm as a project finance partner. Like Malahias she will also be based in the Abu Dhabi office until the new Riyadh office opens. Riddle has an in-depth understanding of the Middle East market and her work has had a strong focus on renewable energy.



### A BOOST FOR BANKING

Banking specialist Umera Ali has joined Simmons & Simmons as a partner. She previously led the Saudi banking practice at a multinational firm and has two decades of experience. In her new role Umera will split her time between the firm's Dubai office and its new Riyadh office, which is set to open by summer 2025, and will support a range of national and international clients operating in these countries and



### NEW PARTNERS AT CMS

CMS have announced they have appointed 56 new partners across the globe including a number in the GCC region. In Muscat, Ali Al Juma and Helen Dean are now partners in the corporate practice, while in Riyadh, Jay Randhawa has become a partner in the Infrastructure, Construction and Energy (ICE) Disputes practice.

### OTHER CHANGES

**Habib Al Mulla and Partners:** Habib Al Mulla have expanded their practice with the opening of a new office in Egypt. The firm now has offices in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Istanbul, Cairo and Moscow. The Cairo office will be led by Kamel El Shendidy, and the team will include Bassem Ehab, Mohamed El Baghdady, Kholoud Hafez, Wagdy Ismail, Mostafa Daoud, Ahmed El Khatib, and Mohamed ElDafrawy.

## MOVERS AND SHAKERS I

The second new partner is Paul Katsouris who is currently based in Dubai but will be relocating to Athens in the summer. Paul provides advice on a wide range of contentious and non-contentious matters for clients including ship owners in the firm's Maritime, Trade and Offshore Group. Finally, Toufic Safie who specialises in M&A, joint ventures and foreign direct investments in the Corporate and Commercial team and is based in Dubai is also now a partner.



### PROJECT LEADERS

Over at A&O Shearman in Dubai Mike Campbell and Richard Chamberlain have become partners. Mike Campbell is a Senior projects, energy and infrastructure lawyer who relocated from London to Dubai in 2017. He is an expert in project and infrastructure financing and refinancing and advises clients across the EMEA region, including sponsors, lenders and procurers on a variety of energy, infrastructure and industrial assets.

He focuses on social, transport and digital infrastructure, natural resources and industrial projects. In contrast his colleague Richard Chamberlain is a project development and construction lawyer who has over a decade's experience of working in the Middle East region. He advises governments, developers, lenders and contractors on large scale project development.

His work focuses on energy, digital and traditional infrastructure but he also has past experience of public private partnerships, and project financing of a range of sectors including power, utilities, social infrastructure, data centres, transport, oil and gas and petrochemicals.

### TO TACKLE TECH

Arjun Uppal has joined KARM Legal Consultants in Dubai as Of Counsel in their FinTech team. Uppal has over 12 years' experience of work with electronic payment systems, digital products structuring, data privacy and gaming laws.

He was previously a Partner at AZB & Partners in India. KARM Legal Consultants are a boutique firm which specialises in technology law, including crypto and tokenisation, blockchain, DLT, and emerging tech.

### OVER AT ADDLESHAW

Jasem Alanizy and Philip Chalmers have both been made partners at Addleshaw Goddard. Alanizy works in the Corporate Finance team based in Saudi Arabia. He specialises in cross-border mergers and acquisitions, as well as private equity and venture capital transactions. He trained in London with a leading international law firm before joining Addleshaw Goddard. Philip Chalmers is based in Dubai and has extensive experience of both conventional and Islamic corporate finance. He is a member of the finance team and has advised funders including those linked to the region's sovereign wealth funds. Chalmers is a Scottish notary public and is legally qualified to practice in both Scotland, and in England & Wales

### NEW ARRIVAL AT KENNEDYS

Jemima McDonald has joined Kennedys' corporate and commercial team in Dubai where she will work as a legal director in the corporate & commercial team alongside partner Tania De Swart, who she has worked with previously. She has substantial experience of advising on complex defence procurement transactions across aviation, maritime, security and public procurement. In the past she worked in-house at Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems. She will provide advice on a wide range of corporate and commercial matters, including M&A, joint ventures, corporate governance, intellectual property, data protection and employment. Her clients will span the defence, transport, travel and insurance sectors.

### RISKY BUSINESS

Gallagher has appointed Harshiv Thakerar as Head of Disputes Risk based in the Middle East. Harshiv will expand Gallagher's dispute resolution practice and client base in the region with an extended geographic focus which will include Africa. Harshiv is a qualified solicitor with extensive experience in litigation funding. He has joined Gallagher from Asertis, which is a legal finance and risk management firm, where he was Chief Investment Officer and board director.

Prior to this, he was a Partner and Head of Litigation for Global Growth Cap. He has also worked at Augusta Ventures. In his role at Gallagher, Harshiv will collaborate with law firms, litigation funders and other financiers to provide dispute resolution and investment insurance solutions.

This specialised coverage, will include products such as after the event (ATE) and contingent legal risk insurance, which helps clients mitigate financial risks associated with legal disputes. He will report to Daniel Miller, Executive Director, Financial Lines and M&A for the Middle East & Africa and will work as an extension of the firm's 40 strong team based in London.

### A CAPITAL FELLOW

Alex Roussos, a specialist in capital markets has joined Greenberg Traurig, as they look to expand their regional offering in this area. Roussos will practice in the firm's UAE and Saudi offices. He has over 20 years' experience of advising on debt, regulatory capital, hybrid, and equity-linked capital markets transactions for governments, international, and regional financial institutions and large corporate entities both across the Middle East and internationally. Roussos is a leader in the market. Previously he spent time as managing partner and co-head of the Middle East banking and finance practice at Dentons in Dubai, and has also worked at Norton Rose Fulbright and Clifford Chance.

### AN ASSET TO WFW

Charlotte Knight who works in Assets & Structured Finance with Watson Farley & Williams (WFW) and is based in Dubai is one of five new partners at the firm. Knight who began her career as a trainee at the firm is a maritime specialist who has represented lenders, lessors, lessees and owners on a wide range of transactions including secured loans, sale and leaseback structures, debt restructurings, loan portfolios and fleet sales. She also regularly advises on sale and purchase transactions, chartering arrangements and new building contracts.

## SEND US YOUR NEWS

If you have news of an appointment or promotion within the legal or financial professions you would like to see reported in Lexis Middle East Law, please send details to: [claire.melvin@lexisnexis.co.uk](mailto:claire.melvin@lexisnexis.co.uk)







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## Employment Terms



**S**audi labour law changes came into force on 19 February 2025 when the labour law Saudi Arabia Cabinet Decision No. 219/1426 was amended, and the Implementing Regulations (Saudi Arabia Ministerial Decision No. 115921/1446) were updated. These changes apply broadly to employment relationships across Saudi Arabia, with limited exceptions for designated special economic zones, which means most employers operating under Saudi Arabia Cabinet Decision No. 219/1426 must comply with them.

### CONTRACT CHANGES

Employers who have not already made sure their employment contracts apply with them should do so urgently. Notice periods for unlimited-term contracts should follow the new statutory periods - which have been standardised at 30 days if the employee gives notice and 60 days if the employer gives it. Any fixed-term contracts, especially those for non-Saudis, should exclude notice periods. Electronic employment contracts are now mandatory, and must specify a salary payment date. All official employment-related notifications must also now be issued via Qiwa or the government portals. Annual leave must now expressly be stated in working days, and employment contracts must comply with the updated Qiwa

template, which includes execution and start dates, optional automatic renewal clauses for fixed term contracts, mandatory overtime provisions, and commission-based pay clauses. Foundation Day has also now been included as a Saudi public holiday and needs to be factored into contracts. It should also be clarified that it does not count toward probation periods. Probation periods also need to be clearly stated in contracts and cannot exceed 180 days. Contracts should now include clear salary break downs which distinguish between basic pay, housing, and transport and whether these are in cash or in-kind. Employers must now provide either accommodation and transport to their employees or equivalent allowances, but the housing allowance requirement does not apply to public sector employers.

Flexible and part-time work must be for a fixed term, follow the MHRSD-approved template, and specify hourly-based wages. The number of working hours can be adjusted by mutual agreement, but employees cannot be required to work a set number of hours. Employees on flexible work contracts are not entitled to end-of-service benefits and cannot be placed under probation. However, they are entitled to proportional annual leave and sick leave, and their contracts must be registered on the designated MHRSD electronic system, which tracks actual hours worked. Their wages can be paid monthly or as agreed but they must receive monthly statements of hours worked and comply with relevant GOSI regulations.

### TEMPORARY AND TRAINING CONTRACTS

The legal framework for temporary, seasonal, and casual

work has remained largely unchanged. These workers are still protected under core labour provisions on areas including working hours, holiday, workplace safety, and compensation for work-related injuries. However, it is important that if their employment exceeds 90 days, it will automatically be reclassified as a standard employment relationship which is subject to full Saudi Arabia Cabinet Decision No. 219/1426 protections, regardless of how the worker's original contract was described or the worker's visa status. These amendments also include detailed provisions on training contracts for students and recent graduates. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) may require employers to host a certain number or percentage of trainees. A formal training contract must be signed, outlining duration, obligations, compensation (if any), and the training programme itself. Employers must also appoint a training supervisor, issue completion certificates, and cannot charge trainees fees. Trainees are not required to continue working for the employer post-training unless agreed in writing. Training contracts can also only be terminated by the employer without compensation if the trainee has violated specified legal provisions. However, trainees can terminate the agreement if the employer breaches their rights or fails to address workplace misconduct. If trainees walk away without cause or refuse agreed employment post-training, employers can recover training expenses, if this is stipulated in the contract.

Sarit Thomas, Knowledge Lawyer co-authored this article.



Contributor

Sara Khoja,  
Employment Partner, Clyde and Co

# Opportunities in the Middle East with Jameson Legal

Jameson Legal is an international legal recruitment company founded in 2010, with specialist divisions for private practice, in-house, interim, and legal tech. We act for client law firms and companies and advise qualified lawyers from NQ to equity partner level, as well as paralegals, compliance professionals, and legal tech professionals.

## Saudi Arabia

### Senior Legal Counsel (Corporate/M&A/Commercial)

A renowned organisation in the food and beverage industry is looking to recruit a Legal Counsel to join their expanding legal team in Saudi Arabia. This role involves providing expert legal counsel on corporate and commercial matters, with a focus on mergers and acquisitions, negotiation, contract review, and drafting. Candidates should have at least 8-10 years of post-qualification experience, be legally qualified in Saudi Arabia, and possess substantial exposure to international law and cross-border transactions. Proficiency in Arabic and experience within the GCC region is essential.

Ref: *SSK-IM-16516*

## Abu Dhabi

### Transactional Lawyer

Our client has undergone an impressive rate of growth in recent times and is now looking for a transactional lawyer to join their legal team in the Abu Dhabi office. This is an excellent opportunity for a transactional lawyer coming from an international law firm or a reputable in-house entity in the FS sector, specifically related to venture capital or funds investing into the US market. It is essential that candidates have at least 1 year of experience and can be common or civil law qualified.

Ref: *RPG-IM-16576*

## Dubai

### Senior Legal Counsel (Corporate M&A)

A growing international brokerage in the financial services sector is seeking a Senior Legal Counsel focused on corporate M&A matters to join their team at their Dubai HQ. The successful candidate will work closely with the CLO and lead corporate M&A duties. Candidates must have at least 5 years of experience working for a leading international law firm and/or in-house team at an international brokerage. A common law qualification from the UK, New Zealand, or Australia (or an equivalent jurisdiction) is required.

Ref: *RPG-IM-16509*

## Abu Dhabi

### Compliance Officer

A global Investment/Asset Management client is looking to hire an experienced Compliance Officer to lead their compliance program for their Abu Dhabi businesses, reporting to the Group Chief Compliance Officer based in the US. The role involves advising and overseeing all compliance activities across the Abu Dhabi entities. Candidates should have a minimum of 7 years of experience in a compliance function within a financial services firm, preferably within an investment/asset management firm. Experience with FSRA, SCA, and ADGM regulators is required.

Ref: *MBP-IM-16304*

## Qatar

### Senior Counsel (Upstream)

Our client, a leading O&G company in the Gulf with an excellent reputation, is offering the opportunity for a senior O&G lawyer to specialise in upstream and EPC work. This is an ideal moment to join their rapidly expanding team and gain the very best in-house experience in an exciting market while advancing your career. Applicants are required to have at least 8 years of post-qualification experience and have worked in a leading law firm or O&G company covering upstream and/or EPC work. Candidates must be qualified in the UK, France, US, New Zealand, or Australia.

Ref: *IJR-IM-16606*

## Saudi Arabia

### Senior Legal Counsel (E-Commerce)

A prominent global e-commerce company is offering the exciting opportunity for a Saudi-qualified lawyer to join their legal team. Candidates will ideally have at least 5 years of legal experience, gained at well-regarded law firms and/or in-house legal teams within the Kingdom. The successful candidate will provide legal guidance on commercial and corporate matters, ensure compliance, draft and review legal documents, and work with regulators. Arabic language skills are essential.

Ref: *SSK-IM-16472*

## Saudi Arabia

### Senior Tax Legal Counsel (Energy)

Our client is looking to recruit an experienced lawyer to join a globally renowned client as a Senior Tax Counsel in Saudi Arabia. This market-leading organisation offers a unique opportunity to be part of an elite in-house legal department. The role requires a minimum of 6 years of experience from international law firms or in-house tax departments. The successful candidate will provide extensive support and strategic legal counsel. Prior experience within Saudi Arabia or the broader Gulf region would be highly regarded.

Ref: *TME-IM-15456*

## Dubai/Abu Dhabi

### TMT Lawyer

An impressive international heavyweight law firm is actively seeking a mid-senior level TMT lawyer to join its market-leading and highly reputable UAE team. This role is open to candidates with 3-6 years of post-qualified experience, who do not need to be currently based in the Middle East. However, candidates must demonstrate high-quality experience gained from a leading international law firm in a prominent jurisdiction. The successful applicant will handle a broad range of matters, with no specific specialism or focus attached to this position.

Ref: *MXY-PM-16501*

For more information or to discuss any of these roles please contact Iain Rainey at [ian.rainey@amesonlegal.com](mailto:ian.rainey@amesonlegal.com), or Jeremy Small at [jeremy.small@amesonlegal.com](mailto:jeremy.small@amesonlegal.com).





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