



the global voice of  
the legal profession\*



Follow us  
**@IBAEvents**  
**#IBALFM**

INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2026

A conference presented by the IBA Law Firm Management Committee,  
supported by the IBA Arab Regional Forum

# IBA Middle East Conference:

## Law firms and in-house legal departments working together

11–12 February 2026

**11 February** (Pre-Conference Dinner) – Jostette Dubai, ICD Brookfield Place, DIFC, Dubai

**12 February** (Conference) – One&Only Royal Mirage, Al Sufouh, Dubai Marina, Dubai  
(Royal Ballroom – located in The Palace)

## Working programme

**WiFi Network:**  
**Royal Mirage**

Network security cannot be guaranteed; if you access the wifi network you do so at your own risk in accordance with the provider's terms and conditions. Anyone else connected to this network might be able to intercept your personal data.

Headline  
conference  
sponsor



All speaker materials and biographies can be found at [www.ibanet.org/conference-details/conf2799](http://www.ibanet.org/conference-details/conf2799)

### Conference Co-Chairs

Sadiq Jafar *Hadef & Partners, Dubai, Co-Vice Chair,  
IBA Law Firm Management Committee*  
Anne Macdonald *Harper Macleod, Glasgow; Co-Chair,  
IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

### Host Committee

Robin Hickman *Addleshaw Goddard, Dubai*  
Mahmoud 'Mac' Fadlallah *Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld  
(Akin), Dubai*  
Jody Waugh *Al Tamimi & Company, Dubai*  
Patryk Karczewski *Amereller, Dubai*  
Emma Tormey *Ashurst, Dubai*  
Mark Bisch *Baker Botts, Dubai*  
Melissa Murray *Bird & Bird, Abu Dhabi*  
Jimmy Haoula *BSA Law, Dubai*  
James Abbott *CMS, Dubai*  
Piers Drysdale *Confluent Law Group, Baghdad*  
Jeremy Miocevic *Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle,  
Dubai*  
Dr Ghada Darwish Karbon *Dr Ghada M. Darwish Karbon Law  
Firm, Doha*  
Julia Onslow-Cole *Fragomen, London*  
Tim Casben *Gowling WLG, Dubai*  
Sadiq Jafar *Hadef & Partners, Dubai*  
Tomas Furlong *Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer, Dubai*  
Oliver Simpson *Maples, Dubai*  
Chris Skipper *Mishcon de Reya, Abu Dhabi*  
Rany Sader *SADER & Associates, Beirut*  
Michael Hilton *Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom,  
Abu Dhabi*  
Kiersten Lucas *Stephenson Harwood, Dubai*

### Corporate Counsel Committee member

Qussay Hajjiri *Abu Dhabi Investment Office, Abu Dhabi*  
James Donald *Accor, Dubai*  
Anthony Bates *adidas, Dubai*  
Ahmad Azzouni *Aujan Group, Dubai*

Lama Majdalani *Bain & Company Dubai*  
Hannah Kennett *Careem, Dubai*  
Ramzi Modad *Chalhoub Group, Dubai*  
Filippo Cossalter *Ericsson, Dubai*  
Moutaz Abdullat *Ferrero, Dubai*  
Yosr Hamza *Gartner, Dubai*  
Haider Khan *GE Aerospace, Dubai*  
Alan Edgar *Kanoo Group, Dubai*  
Mahmoud Awad *Kitopi, Dubai*  
Vanessa Medina *Masdar (a Mubadala Company),  
Abu Dhabi*  
Dina Kottorou *Mercuria, Dubai*  
Nabil Azar *National Bank of Kuwait, Dubai*  
Vera Kolesnik *Nestle, Dubai*  
Dhruv Paul *Noon, Dubai*  
Fady Zedan *Oracle, Dubai*  
Khalid Khan *Seddiqi Holding, Dubai*  
Fadi Mudarres *United Arab Bank, Sharjah*

### International Committee member

Aster Crawshaw *Addleshaw Goddard, London*  
Ramesh Kumar *Allen & Gledhill, Singapore*  
Yasu Emoto *Anderson Mori & Tomotsune, Tokyo*  
David Gutiérrez *BLP Abogados, San José*  
Benedict Teo *Drew & Napier, Singapore*  
Martin Denyes *Fasken Martineau DuMoulin, Toronto*  
Christine Blaise-Engel *Fidal, Paris*  
Phillip Hope *Fox Williams, London*  
Anne Macdonald *Harper Macleod, Glasgow*  
Rasem Kamal *Kamal & Associates, Riyadh*  
Sanela Trzin *Karanovic & Partners, Belgrade*  
Badri Narayanan *Lakshmikumaran & Sridharan Attorneys,  
New Delhi*  
Jan Dernestam *Mannheimer Swartling, Stockholm*  
Keith Oliver *Peters & Peters, London*  
Paul Marmor *Sherrards Solicitors, London*  
Ali Bougrine *UGGC & Associates, Paris*

## Wednesday 11 February

1830 – 2130

**Evening/dinner reception/networking**

**Pre-Conference Dinner**

Josette Dubai, ICD Brookfield Place, DIFC, Dubai

### MOBILE TELEPHONES

Delegates are requested to ensure that mobile telephones and any other portable devices are switched to silent in working sessions.

Headline social event sponsor



Registration will take place in the Royal Ballroom entrance (located in The Palace)

All sessions will take place in the Royal Ballroom (located in The Palace)

All coffee/tea breaks and lunch will take place in the Royal Ballroom Foyer (located in The Palace)

0830 onwards

## Registration and Morning Refreshments

One&Only Royal Mirage (Royal Ballroom – located in the Palace)

King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud St., Al Sufouh Second, Dubai Marina, Dubai, UAE

### Welcome remarks

Sadiq Jafar *Hadef & Partners, Dubai, Co-Vice Chair, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

Anne Macdonald *Harper Macleod, Glasgow; Co-Chair, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

0930 – 1020

## PLENARY SESSION 1

### The UAE, a globally attractive destination

The Governments of the UAE, Abu Dhabi and Dubai have strong reputations for moving quickly and effectively in all areas of development. How has Government created a destination that is attractive to investors, entrepreneurs, professionals, ultra-high net worth individuals and others?

#### Speakers

Sahia Ahmad *Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism, Dubai*

Julia Onslow-Cole *Fragomen, London*

1020 – 1100

## SESSION 2

### From Adoption to Integration: Making AI an Essential Part of Your Legal Workflow

Receive an update on the role of technology in enabling legal professionals to access knowledge and make data-driven decisions. Discussion will also focus on how enhanced access to information is improving client interactions and service delivery.

#### Moderator

Bilal Syed *Thomson Reuters, Dubai*

#### Panellists

Mahmoud 'Mac' Fadlallah *Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP (Akin), Dubai*

David Laliberté *CPX, Abu Dhabi*

Laura Thomson *Emirates Water and Electricity Company, Abu Dhabi*

Sandeep Mehta *JSA Advocates & Solicitors, Mumbai*

Itzik Amiel *THE SWITCH, Amsterdam*

1100 – 1130

## Refreshments and Networking Break

### MOBILE TELEPHONES

Delegates are requested to ensure that mobile telephones and any other portable devices are switched to silent in working sessions.

### Conference dinner sponsors



# Thursday continued

1130 – 1215

## SESSION 3

### The clients speak – a panel of leading regional GCs will provide views on the current legal ecosystem of the region, and will comment on trends and opportunities.

Leading GCs discuss the market for legal services, changes they have observed and enhancements they predict or desire.

*Moderator*

Aster Crawshaw *Addleshaw Goddard, London*

*Panellists*

Hannah Kennett *Careem, Dubai*

Tara Marlow *Kerten Hospitality, Dubai*

Alan Edgar *Kanoo Group, Dubai*

Mahmoud Awad *Kitopi, Dubai*

1215 – 1300

## SESSION 4

### Pitching and panel appointments – how can law firms stand out from the crowd?

How do you stand out from the crowd when your firm has been appointed as part of a panel or framework? In this session, two leading GCs and a BD professional will discuss how law firms can successfully mobilise appointments, develop and enhance relationships with instructing counsel and in-house legal teams and ensure that law firms deliver on promises made in a bid.

*Moderator*

Barbara Koenen-Geerdink *Boost BDM, Dubai*

*Panellists*

Rima Hadid *Emirates Investment Authority, Abu Dhabi*

Anne Macdonald *Harper Macleod, Glasgow*

Teymour Salaam *Sidara, Dubai*

Dr Mohamed El-Mogy *Siemens Energy, Dubai*

1300 – 1430

**Lunch at Royal Ballroom Foyer (located in The Palace)**

1430 – 1510

## SESSION 5

### Discussion with Business Leaders

Two business leaders discuss the rapid and continuous development of the region.

*Moderator*

Jan Dernestam *Mannheimer Swartling, Stockholm*

*Panellists*

Rabea Ataya *Bayt.com, Dubai*

Neil Petch *Virtuzone, Dubai*

#### MOBILE TELEPHONES

Delegates are requested to ensure that mobile telephones and any other portable devices are switched to silent in working sessions.

#### Conference dinner sponsors

**Bird & Bird**

**BSA  
LAW**

**CMS**  
law·tax·future

**CONFLUENT**  
LAW GROUP

**CURTIS**  
Curtis, Mather-Preston, Colt & Potts, S.C.

مكتب د. غادة محمد درويش كربون للمحاماة  
Dr. Ghada M. Darwish Karbon Law Firm

**FRAGOMEN**

# Thursday continued

1510 – 1600

## SESSION 6

### Staying Abreast of Laws and Regulations

The region's laws and regulations are rapidly changing. How do in-house legal departments and law firms stay on top of relevant developments? How do Government, law firms and information providers assist? We will discuss how to stay on top of legal developments. We will hear from providers of knowledge, users of information and others in the legal sector cycle.

*Moderator*

Justine Reeves *Clyde & Co., Dubai*

*Panellists*

Rima Mrad *BSA Law, Dubai*

Melissa McLaren *Pinsent Masons, Dubai*

Rany Sader *Sader & Associates, Beirut*

Zaid Mahomed *Thomson Reuters, Dubai*

1600 – 1630

### Refreshments and Networking Break

1630 – 1715

## SESSION 7

### What is happening in the legal markets of the Middle East region?

There is considerable economic activity in much of the Middle East. How do law firm and business leaders address the challenges and opportunities of the Middle East? We will have an active discussion regarding developments in the Middle East.

*Moderator*

Samer Qudah *Al Tamimi & Company, Dubai*

*Panellists*

Khaled Ragheb *Amereller, Cairo*

Patrik Daintry *CMS, Dubai*

Piers Drysdale *Confluent Law Group, Baghdad*

Rasem Kamal *Kamal & Associates, Riyadh*

1715

### Closing remarks

The IBA, its officers and staff accept no responsibility for any views expressed, presentations or materials produced by delegates or speakers at the Conference.

#### MOBILE TELEPHONES

Delegates are requested to ensure that mobile telephones and any other portable devices are switched to silent in working sessions.

#### Conference dinner sponsors

