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INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2025

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

19–20 February 2025, Kempinski Central Avenue Hotel, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

## Working programme

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All speaker materials and biographies can be found at [www.ibanet.org/conference-details/conf2608](http://www.ibanet.org/conference-details/conf2608)

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Keith Oliver *Peters & Peters, London*

Paul Marmor *Sherrards Solicitors, London*

## Wednesday 19 February

1900 – 2230 **Pre-Conference Dinner**

*Fi'lia Restaurant, SLS Dubai Hotel & Residences, Marasi Drive, Business Bay, 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

**Robert—  
—Walters**

Thursday 20 February

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**All working sessions will take place in the Diamond Ballroom**  
**All coffee/tea breaks and lunch will take place in the Pre-Function Area**

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0830 – 0930 **Registration and Morning Refreshments**

*Kempinski Central Avenue Hotel, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard, Downtown Dubai*

0930 – 0940 **Welcome remarks**

*Sadiq Jafar Hadeef & Partners, Dubai; Conference Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*  
*Paul Marmor Sherrards Solicitors, London; Co-Chair, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

0940 – 1020 **Plenary session 1**

**The Creation of Market Appropriate Laws and Regulations**

The Governments of the UAE, Abu Dhabi and Dubai have strong reputations for moving quickly and effectively in all areas of development. How does Government address market needs in the realm of laws and regulations? How does the UAE compare internationally?

*Guests*

*Sahia Ahmad Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism, Dubai*  
*Julia Onslow-Cole Fragomen, London*

1020 – 1100 **Session 2**

**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 can Government, law firms and information providers assist legal departments?

We will discuss the challenges of staying on top of legal developments. We will hear from providers of knowledge, users of information and others in the legal sector cycle.

*Moderator*

*Dina Mahdi Hadeef & Partners, Dubai*

*Panellists*

*Rima Mrad BSA Law, Dubai*  
*Diana Hamade Diana Hamade Attorneys at Law, Dubai*  
*Zaid Mahomed Practical Law MENA, Dubai*  
*Rany Sader SADER Legal 1863, Beirut*

1100 – 1130 **Refreshments and Networking Break**

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**Conference dinner sponsors**

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# Thursday continued

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1130 – 1215 **Session 3**

## **The clients speak**

A panel of leading regional GCs will provide views on the range and quality of available legal services and the potential for changes and enhancements.

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

*Moderator*

Tim Casben *Gowling WLG, Dubai*

*Panellists*

Ciara Howie *ALEC, Dubai*

Roopal Jobanputra *Core42 (a G42 company), Abu Dhabi*

Lucy Donnelly *DMCC, Dubai*

Ksenia Levushkina *Visa, Dubai*

1215 – 1300 **Session 4**

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

There is considerable economic activity in much of the Middle East, although the news often highlights developments in the UAE and KSA. How do law firm leaders make the right decisions about growth in the Middle East? Where do they open and expand offices? Are there regional opportunities that may be overshadowed by the focus on the UAE and KSA? We will have an active discussion with law firm managing partners from the region regarding developments in the Middle East, with emphasis on the opportunities and challenges.

*Moderator*

Samer Qudah *Al Tamimi, Dubai*

*Panellists*

Melissa Murray *Bird & Bird, Dubai*

James Abbott *CMS, Dubai*

Tom Nolda *Confluent Law Group, Baghdad*

Rasem Kamal *Law Firm of Mohammad Al-Sharif, Riyadh*

1300 – 1430 **Lunch**

1430 – 1510 **Session 5**

## **Discussion with Business Leaders**

Two leading business leaders, who were formerly GCs, discuss the transition from legal to business roles.

*Moderator*

Jan Dernestam *Mannheimer Swartling, Stockholm*

*Panellists*

Kuljit Ghata-Aura *Boeing, Dubai*

Shahreyar Nawabi *Emirates Flight Catering Company, Dubai*

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### **Conference dinner sponsors (continued)**

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ADVOCACY AND  
LEGAL COUNSEL

# Thursday continued

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1510 – 1600 **Session 6**

## **To what extent do law firms meet the needs of Middle Eastern clients and regional offices of multinationals? What is the role of international law firms and how do regional law firms complete the landscape?**

There is a growing range of choice and talent when it comes to legal service providers. There are international law firms, regional and domestic law firms, as well as other professional service entities. How do users make choices? What observations do clients have?

*Moderator*

Sheila Shadmand *Jones Day, Dubai*

*Panellists*

James Donald *Accor, Dubai*

Christopher Gunson *Amereller, Dubai*

Alan Edgar *Kanoo Group, Dubai*

Dhruv Paul *Noon, Dubai*

Philipp Reusch *Reusch Rechtsanwaltsgesellschaft mbH, Berlin*

1600 – 1630 **Refreshments and Networking Break**

1630 – 1715 **Session 7**

## **The Power of Accessible Knowledge: Transforming How Legal Professionals Work**

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*

Natalie Jones *DLA Piper, Dubai*

MinKyu Kim *LG Electronics, Dubai*

Tommaso Pace *Tabby, Dubai*

Mandeep Kalsi *Thomson Reuters, Dubai*

1715 **Closing remarks**

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