



Ayesha Zia
Senior Legal Counsel

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Areas of Practice

- Arbitration and DIFC Courts
- Construction and Real Estate Disputes
- Agency and Franchising Disputes
- Shareholders Disputes
- Insurance Disputes
- General Commercial Disputes

Education

- Master of Laws (LLM) - International Dispute Resolution – Queen Mary University of London (October, 2024)
- Bar Professional Training Course – Cardiff University, United Kingdom (August, 2016)
- Diploma in International Arbitration – Kuala

Summary Profile

Ayesha is a Senior Legal Counsel in the Arbitration and DIFC Courts Department at M&CO Legal. She brings nearly eight years of legal experience in the United Arab Emirates and possesses extensive expertise in international and domestic arbitration, DIFC Court litigation, and complex corporate and commercial advisory matters.

Ayesha plays a central role in the firm's dispute resolution practice. She has advised and represented clients in a wide array of contentious matters, including construction, real estate, hospitality, insurance, agency and franchise, employment, tenancy, shareholder disputes, and general commercial conflicts. Her arbitration experience includes representing clients under the rules of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC), Abu Dhabi International Arbitration Centre (arbitrateAD), among others. She also regularly serves as Tribunal Secretary in proceedings administered by the aforementioned institutions as well as the Istanbul Arbitration Centre (ISTAC) and the International Islamic Centre for Reconciliation and Arbitration (IICRA).

In addition to her contentious work, Ayesha provides comprehensive legal support on a range of corporate and commercial matters. She has experience drafting, reviewing, and negotiating various commercial instruments, including sale and purchase agreements, shareholders' agreements, agency and distributorship agreements, franchise and licensing contracts, investment agreements, and residential and commercial lease agreements. She also advises on employment documentation, commercial policies, and terms and conditions for digital platforms, including privacy policies, refund and return policies, and cookie policies.

Prior to joining M&CO Legal, Ayesha gained valuable international experience in Malaysia, where she worked with established legal practitioners in various capacities, including legal research and advisory. This early exposure to diverse legal systems laid a strong foundation for her current cross-border practice.

Ayesha was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 2016 following completion of the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) at Cardiff University. She also holds a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in International Dispute Resolution from Queen Mary University of London

Lumpur, Malaysia (June 2015)

- Certificate in Oil & Gas Law – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (December 2014)
- Bachelors in law - University of London (External Programme) – (November 2013)

(2024), a Postgraduate Diploma in International Arbitration (2015), and a Postgraduate Certificate in Oil and Gas Law (2014), reflecting her broad academic and sectoral expertise.

Focus Area

Ayesha has experience in a wide range of fields of UAE Law, with a specific focus on matters concerning construction, real estate, insurance and shareholder disputes following her to regularly advise clients on the same. The key cases wherein Ayesha provided her legal services are as follows:

Languages

- English
- Urdu
- Hindi

1. Representing a Claimant in a Dubai seated Arbitration administered by DIAC, amounting to AED 73,861,962.72. The matter concerns a claim initiated by the contractor (Claimant) against the employer (Defendant) in respect of its due entitlements arising out of the FIDIC contract.
2. Representing a Claimant in a Dubai seated Arbitration administered by DIAC, amounting to AED 56,125,826.40. The matter concerns a claim initiated by the contractor (Claimant) against the employer (Defendant) in respect of its due entitlements arising out of the FIDIC contract.
3. Representing a Claimant in a Dubai seated Arbitration administered by DIAC, amounting to AED 48,153,497.85. The matter concerns a claim initiated by the contractor (Claimant) against the employer (Defendant) in respect of its due entitlements arising out of the FIDIC contract.
4. Representing a Claimant in a Dubai seated Arbitration administered by DIAC, amounting to AED 40,541,647.32. The matter concerns a claim initiated by the contractor (Claimant) against the employer (Defendant) in respect of its due entitlements arising out of the FIDIC contract.
5. Represented a Claimant, that is a well-established financial institution, in two insurance claims against a prominent insurance company in Dubai, before the DIFC Courts, amounting to USD 8,689,473.00 and USD 5,429,413.35. Singlehandedly corresponded with the client and drafted the relevant submissions to be submitted before the DIFC Courts. The matter was eventually resolved, and our client was able to recover 80% of its claimed entitlements. Negotiated, drafted and finalized the settlement agreement between the parties.
6. Representing a Defendant in a Dubai seated Arbitration administered by DIAC, amounting to AED 12,770,263.00. The matter concerns a claim initiated by the engineer (Claimant) against the developer (Defendant) in respect of its due entitlements arising out of the engineering consultancy agreement executed between them. The matter is currently in the jurisdictional phase, wherein I drafted the relevant pleadings and submission to be submitted and attended the hearing before the Tribunal.
7. Successfully represented the Claimant in an Oman seated Arbitration administered by ICC, amounting to USD 4,393,367.21. The matter concerned a claim initiated by our client (Claimant) against the Defendant in respect of its

due entitlements arising out of the Refractory Services Agreement, executed between them, pursuant to which the Claimant provided certain services to the Defendant but remained unpaid for the same.

8. Representing a Claimant in a Dubai seated Arbitration administered by DIAC, amounting to AED 9,830,256.43. The matter concerns a claim initiated by the subcontractor (Claimant) against the main contractor (Defendant) in respect of its due entitlements arising out of the FIDIC contract.
9. Representing the Defendant (Main Contractor) in an Abu Dhabi seated Arbitration administered by the Abu Dhabi International Arbitration Centre, amounting to AED 84,269.85. The matter concerns a claim initiated by the subcontractor (Claimant) against the Defendant in respect of its due entitlements arising out of a subcontractor executed between them.
10. Serving as the Tribunal Secretary in an Arbitration seated in Dubai, UAE, administered by DIAC, amounting to USD 18,493,065. The dispute concerns the supply of ultra-sulphur diesel.
11. Serving as the Tribunal Secretary in an Arbitration seated in Istanbul, Turkey, administered by ISTAC, amounting to USD 2,972,817.00. The dispute concerns the rights and entitlements of the purchaser arising out of a purchase agreement entered with the supplier of the products.
12. Provided legal opinion to an international law firm based in the DIFC, on various legal issues, including laws pertaining to foreign ownership of the UAE companies, the arbitrability of disputes, the applicability of the New York Convention and the relevant grounds thereunder to resist the enforcement of a foreign award in the UAE, given the mutual enforcement framework between DIFC and UAE, the recognition and enforcement of a foreign award in Dubai (mainland) through DIFC, etc.
13. Lending assistance in respect of an expert opinion provided to the High Court of Singapore in relation to the enforcement of an interim award issued by a tribunal in DIAC arbitration proceedings. In particular, the Expert Opinion dealt with the applicability of Decree No. 34/2021 in circumstances where the parties had agreed to the application of the DIFC-LCIA arbitration rules, however, the Decree required that proceedings be conducted in accordance with the DIAC arbitration rules.
14. Lending assistance in respect of an expert opinion on Back-to-Back Clauses under UAE Law in an ICC Arbitration instructed by a Contractor, the Claimant for an arbitration proceeding who entered into an agreement with a Sub-Contractor, the Respondent for works of a Project in UAE.
15. Lending assistance in respect of an expert opinion under UAE Law with respect to the validity and effectiveness of pathological arbitration clauses before for an arbitration under the DIFC-LCIA rules.

1. Can an Arbitral Tribunal Award Relief That a Party Never Expressly Requested — Without Exceeding Its Jurisdiction? – 7 April 2025 - Can an Arbitral Tribunal Award Relief That a Party Never Expressly Requested — Without Exceeding Its Jurisdiction? - M and Co
2. UAE Labour Law: My work contract is different from my offer letter, what action can I take? - <https://gulfnews.com/living-in-uae/ask-us/uae-labour-law-my-work-contract-is-different-from-my-offer-letter-what-action-can-i-take-1.1654006562001>
3. Payment of Wages through the Wages Protection System – 4 January 2023 - Payment of Wages through the Wages Protection System - M and Co
4. Bank Guarantees and Employee’s Protection Insurance Schemes – 10 October 2022 - published in Legal 500 - L500 | M&CO Legal > United Arab Emirates | Legal 500 law firm profiles | News and developments
5. The Applicability and Enforceability of Conditional Clauses in the Construction Contracts under the UAE Laws – published in Legal 500 - L500 | M&CO Legal > United Arab Emirates | Legal 500 law firm profiles | News and developments
6. Regulations Concerning Fintech Companies – 17 December 2019 - published in Legal 500 - L500 | M&CO Legal > United Arab Emirates | Legal 500 law firm profiles | News and developments