



Tariq Khan

Partner & Head of International Disputes

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Right of Audience

- Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC)
- Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC)
- Supreme Court of India
- Abu Dhabi Global Market Courts [ADGM]

Area of Practice

- DIFC & ADGM Courts Advocacy
- International Arbitration
- Arbitration-Related Court Proceedings
- Commercial Litigation
- Construction & Infrastructure Disputes
- Energy, Oil & Gas
- Joint Venture & Shareholder Disputes
- Hospitality, Crypto & Fund Management Disputes
- Enforcement of Foreign Judgments & Arbitral Awards
- Maritime Arbitration
- Financial Services & Digital Assets

Languages

- English
- Urdu
- Hindi

Summary Profile

Tariq Khan is Partner and Head of International Disputes at M&CO Legal (UAE), specializing in international arbitration and complex cross-border disputes, with a particular focus on proceedings before the Dubai International Financial Centre Courts and Abu Dhabi Global Market Courts. His practice encompasses arbitration-related litigation, enforcement of arbitral awards and foreign judgments, and urgent interim and injunctive relief in high-value commercial disputes. He regularly represents sovereign-linked entities, multinational corporations and high-net-worth individuals across the Middle East and Asia.

He appears as counsel in arbitrations conducted under major institutional rules including ICC, DIAC, LCIA and SIAC, and advises on disputes arising from construction and infrastructure projects, energy and oil & gas ventures, joint ventures, shareholder conflicts, financial services and hospitality operations. Several matters argued by him have contributed to the development of DIFC jurisprudence, particularly on appellate standards, separability and governing law of arbitration agreements, and the supervisory role of the Courts in support of arbitration.

In addition to acting as counsel, Tariq serves as an arbitrator on the panels of multiple international arbitral institutions and has rendered awards in commercial, infrastructure and financial disputes exceeding USD 10 million in value. He is also a published author on arbitration law, contributing regularly to international legal platforms including Kluwer Arbitration Blog and LexisNexis Middle East.

DIFC & ADGM Courts – Advocacy, Enforcement & Interim Relief

- Representing a client in continuation proceedings before the DIFC Courts, obtaining a worldwide freezing order in relation to AED 2.75 billion (Approx) arbitral award.
- Lead counsel for Defendants in multi-party ADGM Court proceedings brought by five Claimants seeking rescission of NFT sale and portfolio management agreements, restitution, and damages for misrepresentation and fiduciary breach. Matter raises novel issues of UAE and ADGM law, including enforceability of NFT agreements absent a formal licensing framework.
- Successfully represented the Claimant in contempt proceedings where the Respondents breached an anti-suit injunction by initiating foreign proceedings. The Court found the Respondents guilty of contempt, imposing fines of USD 75,000 per contemnor, and referring the matter to the Attorney General for consideration of committal.
- Secured dismissal of a renewed application for permission to appeal against an interim injunction obtained at the DIFC Court of First Instance in dispute value of 40 million USD.

- Co-counselling for an individual and a corporate Defendant in a high-value cross-border dispute before the DIFC Courts, involving a worldwide freezing order of USD 700 million. Matter raises complex issues including jurisdictional challenges, alleged wrongful enforcement through the Dubai Courts, and applications for variation, discharge, and disclosure.
- Secured renewed permission to appeal before the DIFC Court of Appeal in an approximately AED 100 million dispute involving complex commercial and arbitration issues.
- Successfully represented Claimant and obtained an urgent anti-suit injunction before H.E. Justice Michael Black KC, restraining proceedings commenced before the Abu Dhabi Courts in breach of a DIFC-seated arbitration agreement.
- Acted in urgent DIFC Court proceedings arising from a multi-million-dollar renewable energy dispute, securing an ex-parte interim injunction within 24 hours, preserving operational status quo of a critical energy facility.
- Appeared in and argued matters clarifying law governing arbitration agreements, where the DIFC Courts held that: the law of the seat governs the arbitration agreement; the DIFC Courts have exclusive supervisory jurisdiction over DIFC-seated arbitrations; and interim relief in support of arbitration lies squarely within the DIFC Courts' powers.
- Acted in DIFC proceedings providing authoritative guidance on multi-contract and JV dispute resolution structures, confirming primacy of arbitration clauses in principal agreements and reinforcing jurisdictional certainty in cross-border transactions.
- Lead counsel for Appellants before the DIFC Court of Appeal resisting recognition and enforcement of a SIAC arbitral award exceeding USD 39 million, raising significant public international law issues including the bilateral investment treaty between India and the UAE, the validity of foreign service in without-notice recognition proceedings, and the operation of RDC 43.70; also resisting a RDC Part 44 conditions application.
- Assisting leading counsel for Respondents before the DIFC Courts in high-value freezing order proceedings brought by a major bank to enforce an unsatisfied USD 90 million judgment debt, involving allegations of fraudulent asset transfers exceeding USD 170 million, the sham transaction doctrine, and parallel enforcement proceedings in England, Jersey, and Switzerland.
- Lead counsel for the Appellant (CFI 057/2021) in proceedings to enforce an Indemnity Agreement relating to personal liability to Qatar National Bank exceeding AED 91.25 million, securing renewed permission to appeal before the DIFC Court of Appeal and now assisting on the substantive appeal hearing.

Construction, Engineering & Infrastructure Arbitration

- Counsel for a public sector undertaking in ICC arbitration concerning the allegedly unlawful termination of a consortium engaged in constructing and operating the largest blast furnace in Asia, raising consortium liability, termination entitlement, and loss-of-opportunity issues exceeding USD 100 million.
- Lead counsel for the Claimant in Tahkeem (Sharjah ICAC) proceedings against a UAE main contractor and a government authority, arising from delays, disruption, non-payment of retention, and suspension/termination of a subcontract worth AED 38.4 million, including enforcement of AED 5.8 million performance bond and a direct payment obligation under a tripartite agreement.
- Counsel for a leading waste management services provider in DIAC arbitration exceeding USD 20 million, arising from a joint venture for the operation and management of a critical waste and energy facility, involving performance default, revenue sharing, and termination under UAE joint venture law.

Maritime Arbitration

- Lead counsel for the Claimant in LMAA arbitration (LMAA Terms 2021) for over USD 3.42 million, arising from the Respondent's failure over five months to pay hire due under the charterparty, breach of bunker replenishment obligations, and failure to honor a written payment undertaking.
- Advising major Indian port terminal operators on a debt exceeding USD 11 million

owed by a Dubai-based container line and its shareholder, securing precautionary attachment, injunctive relief, vessel arrest, and cargo lien enforcement under UAE law in support of arbitration.

Corporate, M&A & Joint Venture Disputes

- Co-counsel and strategic adviser in a USD 19 million DIAC arbitration arising from a joint venture agreement in the UAE oil and gas sector, covering witness strategy, quantum analysis, jurisdictional submissions, and interim relief applications under DIFC and UAE law.
- Lead counsel for the Claimant, leading post-M&A completion accounts negotiations following a share acquisition and addressing purchase price adjustments and EBITDA shortfalls, now advising on and coordinating invocation of LCIA arbitration to recover a USD 4.9 million overpayment.
- Assisting lead counsel in a USD 40 million DIAC arbitration on jurisdictional objections raised by the Respondent and on interim relief mechanisms, conservatory measures, and court-based routes available in parallel to the arbitration under DIFC and UAE law.

Hospitality, Franchise & Brand Disputes

- Lead counsel for the Claimant franchisor in LCIA arbitration (seat London, English law) against a hotel operator for breach of a franchise agreement, including non-payment of fees provisionally estimated at USD 10.5 million and unauthorized attempts to register the Claimant's trademarks; drafted the Request for Arbitration.
- Lead counsel for the Respondent/Counterclaimant in ICC arbitration arising from termination of a franchise agreement for a branded beach club and restaurant at a five-star Abu Dhabi hotel, resisting wrongful termination claims and advancing counterclaims exceeding AED 3.5 million for total failure of consideration, breach of trademark maintenance obligations, and fraudulent misrepresentation.
- Lead counsel for the Claimant in a DIAC matter (seat Dubai, English law) arising from breach of a confidentiality and non-circumvention agreement connected to a hotel acquisition, involving misuse of confidential deal information, currently at the stage of invoking arbitration.

Financial Services, Digital Assets & Investment Disputes

- Lead counsel for Defendants in multi-party ADGM Court proceedings brought by five Claimants seeking rescission of NFT sale and portfolio management agreements, restitution, and damages for misrepresentation and fiduciary breach. Matter raises novel issues of UAE and ADGM law, including enforceability of NFT agreements absent a formal licensing framework.
- Representing a fund manager in a USD 4 million dispute involving token liquidation and digital asset management, and separately for a crypto management company in an Abu Dhabi dispute with investors concerning tokens valued at USD 2.67 million.
- Counsel for a UAE-registered commercial agent resisting enforcement of an ICC Final Arbitral Award (USD 160,652) under Section 61 of the ADGM Arbitration Regulations 2015, raising Section 62 opposition grounds, ADGM CPR timelines, the interplay with onshore execution under the 2018 ADGM-ADJD MOU, and a without-prejudice set-off proposal.
- Representing investors from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait in a USD 5 million DIAC arbitration involving subscription agreement and wakalah investment disputes, raising Sharia-compliant investment structuring and fiduciary duty issues under UAE law.
- Advising on recovery of a USD 492,000 success fee from a debt refinancing mandate, including DIFC freezing order strategy and cross-border enforcement in Switzerland where the relevant assets are located.

Cross-Border Enforcement

Supreme Court of India; Stamping of Foreign Arbitral Awards

Forum: Supreme Court of India | Role: Assisting Counsel

Appeared as assisting counsel in proceedings in which the Court held that stamping of foreign arbitral awards is not required as a precondition to enforcement — an important ruling clarifying the enforcement regime for foreign awards in India.

Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Award; US Seismic Imaging Provider

Forum: Indian Courts | Role: Counsel for Claimant

Represented a leading US-based seismic imaging service provider in proceedings for the enforcement of a foreign arbitral award in India, involving jurisdictional and procedural challenges to enforcement.

Arbitrator Experience

Tariq Khan is empanelled as an arbitrator with leading international arbitral institutions, including the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC), Saudi Centre for Commercial Arbitration (SCCA), Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC), Abu Dhabi Global Market Dispute Resolution Hearing Centre (DRHC), Asian International Arbitration Centre (AIAC), Singapore International Mediation Centre (SIMC), EODID Athens Mediation & Arbitration Organization, Russian Arbitration Centre, Tashkent International Arbitration Centre (TIAC), and International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC).

He has acted as Sole Arbitrator in ten institutional and ad hoc arbitrations involving construction, infrastructure, commercial, hospitality and financial disputes exceeding USD 10 million in value.

Construction & Infrastructure

Experience includes disputes concerning suspension and termination of contracts, payment defaults, variations and escalation claims, delay analysis, extension of time, quantum assessment and liquidated damages. Matters have involved government and defence contracts, factory construction projects, large-scale infrastructure developments, BOQ interpretation, valuation of additional works, statutory levies, final accounts, defect liability and release of retention sums.

Commercial & Hospitality

Has rendered awards in disputes involving distribution and supply agreements, marketing and brand placement arrangements, joint ventures and partnership dissolutions. Also adjudicated hospitality matters relating to hotel management agreements, franchise termination, revenue sharing, operational defaults and service quality issues.

Financial & Complex Commercial Matters

Includes disputes arising from financing and security arrangements, regulatory compliance and contractual liability, as well as complex commercial cases involving enforceability of contracts, exclusivity and non-compete obligations, and multi-party proceedings with counterclaims and set offs.

Ongoing and Key Engagements

Construction, Infrastructure & Energy

- DIAC arbitration concerning UAE waste-management plant dispute (USD 15M)
- Multiple EPC disputes involving delay, defects and quantum claims (USD 8M)
- Renewable energy wind-project disputes across multiple capacities
- Public sector energy and gas supply arbitration exceeding USD 200M
- ICC arbitrations involving design violations, termination and consortium disputes
- Biomass plant EPC arbitration and infrastructure supply disputes

Hospitality & Commercial

- Multiple arbitrations for ultra-luxury hotels in the UAE (USD 50M combined)
- LCIA hotel management agreement dispute (London seat)

- ICC hotel franchise dispute (Zurich seat)
- DIAC shareholder dispute involving luxury hotel chain
- Joint venture dispute relating to luxury transport operations
- Supply chain dispute for regional food company
- Media and broadcasting contractual dispute

Financial Services & Corporate

- EUR 50M shareholder buyout valuation arbitration (ICC)
- Investment subscription and Wakalah disputes (DIAC)
- Crypto-asset and token liquidation disputes in Abu Dhabi
- Complex acquisition arbitration under SIAC rules
- USD 95M indemnity vs guarantees advisory under UAE & DIFC law

Enforcement & Advisory

- Enforcement action involving foreign award and treaty interaction (New York & Riyadh Conventions)
- Enforceability of post-Decree 34 DIFC-LCIA clauses
- Limitation and governing law advisory under English and UAE law
- Enforcement of foreign award for US-based service provider

Honours & Recognition

- Distinguished Partner of the Year – UAE (2025)
- Dispute Resolution Law Firm of the Year – UAE (2025)
- Forbes Legal Powerlist
- BW Legal 40 Under 40
- UK-India Law Partnership Award for Excellence in Arbitration & Mediation (2024)

Recent Publications

- Everything You Need to Know About Arbitration in India – Thomson Reuters (2022)
- Law Relating to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises – Thomson Reuters (2022)
- From Past to Present: Comparative Analysis of DIFC Courts Law No. 2 of 2025 – LexisNexis Middle East (2025)
- Holding Parties to Their Word: Anti-Suit Injunctions and the Enforcement of Arbitration Agreements in the DIFC – LexisNexis Middle East (2026)
- Published over 70 articles in international journals and platforms including Kluwer Arbitration Blog, Bar and Bench, and LexisNexis Middle East.