



DIFC Employment Law vs. UAE Labour Law: The Key Challenges

Stephenson Harwood in partnership with the DIFCA hosted an employment seminar targeting employers and employees alike to discuss this trending topic.

Organised by Stephenson Harwood Middle East LLP (Stephenson Harwood) and Dubai International Financial Centre Authority (DIFCA), The seminar was attended by 200 attendees and was also followed online by a score of people across the globe who joined the seminar through the live video web-link sponsored by Thomson Reuters. The seminar tackled the key issues of termination and restrictive covenants and looked at aspects from both a DIFC and UAE perspective.

An expert panel which included HE Justice Ali Al Madhani (DIFC Courts judge), HE Mohammed Abo Sbiha (Dubai Courts judge), Nasser Malalla Ghanem (senior partner, Nasser Malalla Advocates & Legal Consultants) and Bushra Ahmed (barrister & head of Dispute Resolution, KBH Kaanuun) led the discussions with Shiraz Sethi, associate at Stephenson Harwood moderating the proceedings and inviting questions from the audience through their individual iPads, which were given to each delegate during the registration process. In addition, a number of live

polling questions were put to the audience and 'real time' results were projected to the big screens and discussed by the panel.

Rovine Chandrasekera, managing partner of Stephenson Harwood gave the opening remarks, welcomed the delegates and provided a snapshot on the structure of the employment practice at the firm, after which Shiraz Sethi gave a brief introduction into both the DIFC Courts and the Dubai Courts regime. He commented that, "In 2013, there were 55 employment cases within the DIFC Courts and 6,400 employment cases within the Dubai Courts" and that "the DIFC Courts was fast becoming the dispute resolution centre of choice for those who look to seek a common law jurisdiction to effectively tackle disputes".

Nadda El Kaloush (legal Counsel from Travelport) said, "I found the seminar very useful, which clearly set out the key differentials between the jurisdictions and proved to be very helpful for our line of work".

The session was aimed at providing the audience with a flavour of the typical issues employers and

employees face during and post the employment relationship. The closing remarks befittingly were provided by our guest speaker, Anne Pritam, (employment partner from the UK office), who provided a succinct insight into the UK regime and how it differs from the UAE.

Stephenson Harwood and DIFCA co-hosted this seminar in support of the DIFC Courts Pro Bono Programme, who were also represented at the seminar. 

Above: The expert panel
Below(l-r): Anne Pritam; Rovine Chandrasekera

