

Dubai DIFC Mediation Centre Established (Alongside Other Reforms).

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The Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Courts, which had operated under DIFC Laws No (1) and 12 of 2004, will now operate under Law No. (2) of 2025. From publicly available sources, the 2025 Law introduces significant reforms to the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Courts, including in the realms of arbitration and mediation. Key provisions include,

- the establishment of a Mediation Centre within the DIFC Courts, paving an alternative dispute resolution pathway for users;
- granting the DIFC Courts the exclusive jurisdiction to hear and resolve civil, commercial, and labour claims involving DIFC bodies or institutions. This

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encompasses matters related to the recognition or enforcement of arbitration awards under DIFC arbitration law;

- empowering the DIFC Courts to issue provisional and protective measures even in cases related to external arbitration, provided that protective measures are taken within the DIFC.

These reforms underscore Dubai's commitment to enhancing judicial efficiency and promoting amicable dispute resolution mechanisms within the DIFC framework.

The Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) is one of Dubai's premier independent free zones, established over 20 years ago as a leading financial hub for companies operating across the MEASA region (Middle East, Africa, and South Asia). It has since evolved into a globally recognized centre for finance, innovation, and dispute resolution. Recent growth in DIFC activity has been significant. The DIFC Authority's operating income increased 40% in 2024, and there are now no fewer than approx.

7,000 companies reported to be based in the free zone. An integral part of the DIFC ecosystem, the DIFC Courts provide a world-class common law judicial system, offering swift, sophisticated and internationally recognized legal solutions.

Whilst as stated it replaces DIFC Laws No. (10) and (12) of 2004, and annuls conflicting provisions in other legislation, existing regulations that do not conflict with the new provisions will remain in effect until new regulations and decisions are introduced to replace them. The 2025 law, which was announced on January 10, 2025, will take effect the day after it is published in the Official Gazette. There is no time frame yet available for the specific details as to when the DIFC Mediation Centre will open. But allowing that the wider DIFC and specifically the DIFC Courts is at this point well established, and well resourced, it is taken that there will not be much of a wait. Further commentary on this development will be offered as and when it is helpful.

Emily Martin, head clerk at 4-5 Gray's Inn Square commented:

‘ As a large well established barristers chambers with a total membership of around 125 we are well placed to serve both UK and international clients. Members of chambers are barristers, arbitrators and mediators and often on the Alternative Dispute Resolution side have experience as acting both as the decision maker and counsel for parties involved in ADR processes. 4-5 Gray's Inn Square is a frequent visitor to Dubai with Caroline Kenny K.C and Leonora Riesenburger speaking at the last Dubai Arbitration Week. But we don't just go there every November; we are one of the sponsors of the UAE: 10TH INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION & ADR SUMMIT on April 25 with some of our members speaking. 4-5 Gray's Inn Square are proud to have members who live in the UAE, members who frequently visit the UAE and members who have rights of audience at the DIFC and ADGM courts. The establishment of the DIFC Mediation Centre is an initiative to be applauded. Our mediation

group is very experienced and includes three King's Counsel. We can assist clients with all aspects of a mediation'

Members of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square Chambers Mediation group often act as both counsel in construction disputes before the courts, arbitration panels and mediators and adjudicators. Group members are also comfortable sitting as the decision maker and hearing construction claims as adjudicator, arbitrator and mediator. There are 27 members in the group, with 3 silks. Biographical details of the Mediation Group can be found here: [ADR Mediation | 4-5 Gray's Inn Square.](#)

Queries as to the professional availability of members of the group can be directed to Emily Martin on +44 (0)20 7404 5252 or by email to clerks@4-5.co.uk