

## **Abu Dhabi Decision No. 21/2024**

### **Foreign Lawyers' Advocacy in Abu Dhabi Civil Family Court**

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| Type         | Law   |
| Issued on    | 1 May 2024 (corresponding to 22 Shawwal 1445 H) |
| Nature       | Decision  |
| Jurisdiction | Abu Dhabi                                       |
| Copyright    | Sader   |

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Document link: [https://www.lexismiddleeast.com/law/AbuDhabi/Decision\\_21\\_2024](https://www.lexismiddleeast.com/law/AbuDhabi/Decision_21_2024)

## Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department

After reviewing Abu Dhabi Law No. 1/1974 reorganizing the government apparatus in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and its amendments

Abu Dhabi Law No. 23/2006 regarding the Judicial Department in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and its Amendments

Abu Dhabi Law No. 14/2021 regarding Civil Marriage and its effects in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, And its amendments

And Federal Decree-Law No. 34/2022 regarding the organization of the legal professions and legal consultations

Abu Dhabi Decision No. 13/2011 regarding lawyers admitted before the courts of the Judicial Department

Abu Dhabi Decision No. 8/2022 regarding the adoption of the regulations for Civil Marriage and No-Fault Divorce procedures in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Decides as follows:

### Article 1 - Definitions

In applying the provisions of this resolution, the following words and expressions shall have the meanings shown correspond to each of them, unless the context of the text requires otherwise:

Emirate: The Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Department: Judicial Department - Abu Dhabi.

Chairman: Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department.

Roll: Registration list of foreign lawyers accepted before the Abu Dhabi Civil Family Court.

The Committee: The Lawyers' Affairs Committee formed pursuant to the Abu Dhabi Decision No. 13/2011.

Foreign lawyer: Every natural person who practices the legal profession and whose name is registered in the register of foreign lawyers after the committee's approval.

Client: Every foreigner or non-Muslim citizen, male or female, who has a domicile, residence, or place of work in the emirate who wishes to appoint a foreign lawyer before the Abu Dhabi Civil Family Court.

### Article 2 - Scope of Application

This resolution applies to the representation of litigants before the Abu Dhabi Civil Family Court in disputes related to the application of the provisions of Abu Dhabi Law No. 14/2021 regarding Civil Marriage Law and its effects in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

### Article 3 - Register of Authorized Foreign Lawyers

A register of foreign lawyers granted the right of audience before the Abu Dhabi Civil Family Court shall be established at the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department as follows:

1. First Instance and Appeal Courts: Roll of lawyers permitted to practice at the first instance and appeal stages.
2. Cassation Court: Roll of lawyers permitted to practice before the cassation court.

### Article 4 - Registration Requirement

No lawyer may represent litigants before the Abu Dhabi Civil Family Court unless his/her name is registered in one of the following two rolls:

1. Roll of registered lawyers accepted before the courts of the Judicial Department.
2. Roll of registered foreign lawyers accepted before the Abu Dhabi Civil Family Court.

### Article 5 - Eligibility Criteria for Foreign Lawyers

The following conditions are required for those who register their names in the Roll of Foreign Lawyers:

1. English Language Proficiency: Proficiency in reading, speaking, and writing English.
2. Good Conduct and Reputation: Good conduct and reputation, with no previous conviction for a felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude, even if the sentence has been expunged.
3. Fitness for Duties: Fit to perform their duties to the fullest, provided that they are not less than 21 years old.
4. Law degree: Holds an undergraduate degree in law or equivalent legal studies from a recognized university or college.
5. Work experience: Previous work experience in law, legal consultations, or similar legal services for a period of no less than 15 years. A decision by the Undersecretary shall determine the similar legal work referred to in this clause.

6. Professional Indemnity Insurance: Submission of a valid Professional Indemnity Insurance issued by an insurance company licensed to operate in the UAE, unless the lawyer's liability is covered under the insurance policy of the firm he works for, according to the rules set by the committee.
7. Legal Training: Successfully complete the legal training program prepared according to the regulations.
8. Office in Abu Dhabi: Practice law through one of the law firms or legal consultancies licensed in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
9. Additional Conditions: Any other additional conditions determined by the committee.

The committee may exempt any of the conditions mentioned if the interest so requires or if the applicant's experience justifies it.

## **Article 6 - Revocation of Registration**

Any lawyer who has lost one of the registration conditions stipulated in Article (5) of this resolution shall be removed from the roll.

## **Article 7 - Role of the Lawyers Affairs Committee**

The Lawyers Affairs Committee, established under Resolution No. 13 of 2011, shall have the following competencies:

1. Registration and Renewal: Handling the registration, renewal of registration, and removal of foreign lawyers from the Roll.
2. Complaint Handling: Reviewing and addressing complaints submitted against foreign lawyers and taking necessary actions.
3. Regulatory Measures: Implementing appropriate measures regarding the registration of foreign lawyers in the Roll.

## **Article 8 - Registration in the Roll**

Applications for registration in the Roll shall be submitted to the head of the Committee on the designated form, accompanied by the necessary supporting documents. The Committee may request any clarifications or additional information as deemed necessary.

## **Article 9 - Application Review and Committee Meetings**

1. Meeting Protocol: The Committee shall meet at the invitation of its head to consider submitted applications in the order of their receipt. A meeting is valid if attended by at least five members, provided that the head or the deputy head of the Committee is among them.
2. Decision-Making: The Committee shall issue its decisions with the approval of at least four of its members, either accepting the names of those who meet the required conditions or rejecting the application. The applicant whose application is rejected shall be notified of the rejection decision immediately upon its issuance at the address specified in his application.
3. Grievance Procedure: An applicant whose application has been rejected may submit a grievance to the Committee head within thirty days from the date of notification of rejection. Failure to respond to the grievance within thirty days from the date of its submission shall be considered a rejection of the grievance, and the decision shall be final and cannot be appealed.
4. Reapplication Process: A lawyer whose application has been rejected may reapply to the Committee for registration in the Roll after a minimum period of one year. The Committee retains the discretion to accept or reject the reapplication.
5. Registration Renewal: Registration in the Roll is valid for one year and can be renewed upon request. Lawyers must submit a renewal application at least thirty days before the current registration period expires.
6. Late Renewal and Cancellation: If a lawyer fails to request the renewal of their registration within thirty days after the expiration of the registration period, their registration in the Roll shall be canceled.

## **Article 10 - Committee's Discretion on Registration Renewal**

The Committee may, based on the requirements of the public interest or for any other reasons it deems appropriate, not approve the renewal of registration in the Roll.

## **Article 11 - Temporary Advocacy Rights**

The Committee may authorize one or more lawyers who are citizens of a foreign country and practicing law therein to plead in a specific case before the Abu Dhabi Civil Family Court. In urgent cases, the authorization is issued by the the Committee head after payment of the service fee. The Undersecretary of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department shall issue the regulations regarding the temporary right of audience.

## **Article 12 - Advocacy Oath**

Lawyers are required to take the legal oath before they can appear before the court. This oath must be taken in the presence of the President of the Abu Dhabi Civil Family Court, with the following declaration:

*"I swear by Almighty God to faithfully and honorably perform my duties, to respect the UAE laws, to maintain the integrity of the profession, and to observe its traditions and ethics."*

## **Article 13 - Registration and Service Fees**

The Undersecretary of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department shall issue a decision to determine the fees for registration in the Roll of Foreign Lawyers and any other requests related to the implementation of the provisions of this resolution.

## **Article 14 - General and Transitional Provisions**

The provisions of Federal Decree-Law No. 34/2022 regarding the regulation of the legal professions shall apply to all matters not specifically provided for in this resolution.

## **Article 15 - Implementation**

The Undersecretary of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department shall issue the necessary decisions to implement the provisions of this resolution.

## **Article 16 - Publication and Effective Date**

This resolution shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall come into effect three months after the date of its publication.

Issued: 1st of May 2024

**H.H. Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan**  
**Chairman - Abu Dhabi Judicial Department**