

GCC Laws

GCC Legal Flash News – February 2026 Issue No. 2

	Legal Updates	Description
United Arab Emirates (UAE)		
1	New UAE Federal Decree Law on Child Digital Safety	The United Arab Emirates enacted Federal Decree-Law No. 26 of 2025 on Child Digital Safety , which came into force on 01 January 2026 , establishing a comprehensive legal framework to protect children in the digital environment. The law defines a “child” as any individual under the age of 18 and applies to digital platforms, internet service providers, and caregivers. It introduces governance mechanisms, including a Child Digital Safety Council , risk-based classification of digital platforms, mandatory age-verification measures, enhanced privacy protections, and requirements for reporting and managing harmful content online. The legislation aims to prevent exposure to digital risks and harmful content, safeguard privacy and personal data for minors, and strengthen national oversight of digital safety for children.
2	New UAE Federal Decree Laws Reforming Capital Markets Framework	The United Arab Emirates enacted Federal Decree-Law No. 32 of 2025 (relating to the Capital Market Authority) and Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2025 (concerning the Regulation of Capital Markets), both entering into force on 01 January 2026 . These laws replace the former Securities and Commodities Authority with an independent Capital Market Authority and define its core supervisory, regulatory and governance mandates. The legal framework reinforces regulatory independence, aligns oversight functions with international standards, and introduces proactive measures to preserve capital markets stability and integrity, including enhanced intervention powers and strengthened frameworks for financial practice and risk monitoring.
3	UAE Implements Major Amendments to Commercial Companies Law	The United Arab Emirates issued significant amendments to the Commercial Companies Law through Federal Decree-Law No. 20 of 2025 , which took effect on 01 January 2026 . The reform modernises the corporate legal framework in mainland UAE by, among other measures, clarifying the application of the law to branches and representative offices of free zone companies operating onshore, formally recognising non-profit companies , and permitting multiple classes of shares for limited liability companies. The amendments also embed statutory shareholder mechanisms such as drag-along and tag-along rights and provide for private placements by private joint stock companies and corporate redomiciliation between licensing jurisdictions while preserving legal personality. These changes align the UAE’s corporate regime more closely with international standards and enhance flexibility in structuring, governance, and capital arrangements.

4	Amendments to Civil Procedures Law	The United Arab Emirates enacted Federal Decree-Law No. 22 of 2025 , which amends the UAE Civil Procedures Law (Federal Decree-Law No. 42 of 2022) . The decree was issued on 1 October 2025 and entered into force on 1 January 2026 , introducing comprehensive procedural reforms to the civil litigation framework. Key changes include the establishment of specialised judicial circuits for inheritance matters , revised formal requirements for filing appeals, expanded scope for cassation review, and enhanced authority for the Public Prosecutor in appellate proceedings. The amendments aim to streamline procedural efficiency and clarify appellate and specialist court processes.
5	Ajman Ruler Issues Law Establishing Rental Dispute Resolution Centre	His Highness Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al Nuaimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ajman , has issued Law No. 1 of 2026 , establishing a Rental Dispute Resolution Centre in the emirate to replace the existing Rental Disputes Committee and modernise the legislative framework governing landlord-tenant relations. The law provides for a specialised judicial body to hear and adjudicate rental disputes with clear procedures aligned with recognised legal and judicial best practices, enhancing efficiency, transparency and stability in the real estate sector. The law is scheduled to come into force on 1 February 2026 and will be published in the Official Gazette.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

6	Saudi Capital Market Opened to All Categories of Foreign Investors	The Capital Market Authority (CMA) of Saudi Arabia published an official announcement that the Kingdom's capital market will be opened to all categories of foreign investors , allowing non-resident investors to directly invest across all market segments from 1 February 2026 . The regulatory amendments approved by the CMA's board eliminate the longstanding Qualified Foreign Investor (QFI) requirement and the swap-based access framework, thereby broadening foreign investor access to the Main Market of the Saudi Exchange. These changes are intended to diversify the investor base and enhance liquidity in the Saudi capital markets
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Sultanate of Oman

7	New Regulation on Work Injuries and Occupational Diseases	Oman's Social Protection Fund (SPF) has issued Ministerial Decision No. 1 of 2026 , introducing a new regulatory framework governing work injuries and occupational diseases . The regulation standardises coverage under the social protection system and applies to all insured workers, including permanent, temporary and part-time employees. It requires employers to contribute 1 per cent of the insured employee's wage to the Work Injuries and Occupational Diseases Insurance Branch, fully borne by the employer. The decision also sets mandatory reporting timelines for workplace injuries and occupational diseases and introduces financial penalties for late reporting , strengthening enforcement and compliance mechanisms. The new framework aims to enhance worker protection and clarify procedural and financial obligations relating to workplace injury compensation.
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State of Kuwait

8	Amendments to Television and Radio Advertising Regulations	The Government of Kuwait has introduced new amendments to the regulations governing television and radio advertising , including updates to pricing rules, operational procedures , and oversight responsibilities for broadcast advertising. The changes were effected through two ministerial decrees in January 2026 , with Kuwait Decree No. 2/2026 amending provisions of Ministerial Decision No. 992/2022 on TV advertising — redefining the competent authority, expanding departmental responsibilities, and introducing a 25 % surcharge on ads aired during live programming on Kuwait Television via the digital platform 51 . A corresponding amendment to Ministerial Resolution No. 993/2022 was also issued for radio advertising, aligning similar pricing and compliance provisions. The revisions aim to streamline advertising operations, enhance compliance with technical and literary standards, organise pricing for premium and special event programming, and clarify contract administration roles within the Mini
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State of Qatar

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Qatar Financial Centre Recognises DIFC and ADGM Data Protection Regimes

The **Qatar Financial Centre (QFC)** formally recognised the data protection frameworks of the **Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC)** and the **Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM)** as providing an adequate level of protection for personal data. This recognition permits the **transfer of personal data between the QFC, DIFC and ADGM without the need for additional contractual safeguards or regulatory approvals**, subject to compliance with the applicable data protection laws of each jurisdiction. The measure aligns the QFC with leading regional financial free zones and reflects a coordinated regulatory approach to cross-border data governance. It is intended to support financial services, fintech and multinational operations by reducing legal friction for intra-group and inter-jurisdictional data flows while maintaining established standards of privacy and regulatory oversight.

Kingdom of Bahrain

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Bahrain Ratifies Secured Transactions Law

Bahrain's King **Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa** has ratified and promulgated **Law (3) of 2026**, establishing a **Secured Transactions Law** to create a unified legal framework for security interests over movable assets. The law was issued on **29 January 2026** and aims to widen access to credit by allowing businesses to use receivables, inventory, stock and other non-real-estate assets as collateral. The law will **come into force 12 months after its Official Gazette publication**, following issuance of executive regulations by the Minister of Commerce within eight months of Gazette publication.

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