

PART OF



**SINGAPORE  
CONVENTION  
WEEK 2025**



**Singapore International  
Dispute Resolution Academy**

*A SIDRA Forum at  
Singapore Convention on Mediation Week*

# **Building Bridges in ADR: MENA Meets Singapore**

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27 August 2025 (Wednesday)  
1:30 – 6:30 PM

Azalea I, II and III at Shangri-La Hotel  
22 Orange Grove Rd, Singapore 258350

# About SIDRA

*“On thought leadership, the Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy or SIDRA was established as a platform for thought leadership in dispute resolution theory, practice and policy, and this includes of course the area of mediation as well. SIDRA strengthens Singapore’s thought leadership in this area through its research projects, such as its Singapore Convention on Mediation research project, which produced the first commentary on the Convention, and the International Dispute Resolution Survey research project, which captured respondents’ considerations in the use of international commercial dispute resolution, including arbitration, mediation and litigation.”*

**Senior Minister of State Edwin Tong**

**Singapore Parl Debates; Vol 94, Sitting No 117; 4 February 2020**

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SIDRA is a platform for thought leadership in international dispute resolution theory, practice and policy. A research centre at the Yong Pung How School of Law, Singapore Management University, SIDRA leads the way through projects, publications and events that promote dynamic and inclusive conversations on how to constructively engage with and resolve differences and disputes at global, regional and national levels. In particular, SIDRA differentiates itself through its focus on applied research that has practical impact on industry.

Specifically, SIDRA is mandated with three research programs:

- Appropriate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Empirical Research;
- International Mediation and the Singapore Convention on Mediation; and
- Next Generation Dispute Resolution.

# Programme

Time	Details
1.30 - 2.00 PM	Registration
2.00 - 2.15 PM	Opening remarks
2.15 - 2.30 PM	<b>Keynote speech by Guest-of-Honour</b>  <i>Mr. Murali Pillai SC</i> <i>Senior Minister of State,</i> <i>Ministry of Law and Ministry of Transport</i>
2.30 - 2.45 PM	<b>Signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)</b>  <i>Singapore Management University with</i> <i>Omani &amp; Partners</i>
2.45 - 4.00 PM	<b>Panel 1</b> Building ADR Institutions in MENA: Insights from the SIDRA Surveys
4.00 - 4.15 PM	Tea break
4.15 - 5.15 PM	<b>Panel 2</b> Legislative Reform and ADR in MENA: Opportunities and Trends
5.15 - 6.15 PM	<b>Panel 3</b> Judicial Engagement and ADR in MENA and Singapore
6.15 PM - 6.30 PM	Closing remarks

# Guest-of-Honour

*Mr. Murali Pillai SC*

*Senior Minister of State,  
Ministry of Law and Ministry of Transport  
Singapore*



Mr Murali Pillai SC was appointed as Minister of State for Law and Transport on 1 July 2024. He was promoted to Senior Minister of State on 23 May 2025. He is a third term Member of Parliament. He is currently serving in Jurong East- Bukit Batok Group Representative Constituency.

He graduated with LL.B. (Hons) from National University of Singapore (NUS) in 1992. He holds an LLM from the same university. He has a double MBA degree from University of California, Los Angeles and NUS. He is a Fellow of Singapore Academy of Law and the Singapore Institute of Arbitrators. He is also a Member of Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. In addition, he is an Associate Member of the Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants.

He had an extensive litigation practice for almost 30 years. He was appointed as Senior Counsel in 2020.

# Dean of Yong Pung How School of Law

## *Professor Lee Pey Woan*



Professor Lee Pey Woan is Dean and Professor of Law at Yong Pung How School of Law (YPHSL). She was previously Vice Provost (Faculty Matters) at the Office of the Provost and was closely involved in the review and development of the University's academic governance policies.

Pey Woan teaches Corporate Law but her research interests encompass company, private and commercial law. She publishes widely and co-authored multiple textbooks on her fields of research. Her works have been cited by the Singapore Court of Appeal, Singapore High Court and the Canadian Supreme Court. Pey Woan also serves the legal profession by periodically speaking at legal conferences.

Pey Woan graduated from King's College London and subsequently obtained the Bachelor of Civil Law from Oxford University. She is also an Advocate and Solicitor of the Singapore Supreme Court.

## Panel 1

### Building ADR Institutions in MENA: Insights from the SIDRA Surveys

This session explores the role of ADR institutions in shaping dispute resolution in the MENA region, drawing on insights from the SIDRA Surveys 2022 and 2024.

Panellists will examine key performance indicators, persistent challenges, and emerging trends such as hybrid procedures and institutional growth. Issues such as legal fragmentation, weak enforcement, and limited mediation uptake will be addressed.

The discussion will also identify strategic steps to advance ADR, including legal harmonisation, institutional collaboration, and awareness-building.

#### Moderator



**Professor Nadja Alexander**

*Professor of Law  
(Yong Pung How School  
of Law, Singapore  
Management  
University);  
Director (SIDRA)*

#### Speakers



**H.E. Dr. Sheikh Thani bin Ali Al-Thani**

*Vice Chairman of the Qatar  
International Center for  
Conciliation & Arbitration,  
and Founder (Dr. Thani Bin  
Ali Al Thani Law Firm –  
Qatar)*



**Dr. Emad Hussein**

*Senior Research Fellow,  
SIDRA; Independent  
Arbitrator, Accredited  
Mediator, Academic and  
Author (MENA)*



**Dr. Nasser Al-Adba**

*Managing Partner  
and Head  
(Arbitration, Omani &  
Partners LLP (Qatar))*



**Mr. Hicham Zegrari**

*Secretary General  
(Casablanca International  
Mediation and Arbitration  
Centre (Morocco))*



**Ms. Mariam Gotsiridze**

*Principal Research  
Fellow (SIDRA)*



**Professor Marike Paulsson**

*Secretary General, Council International  
Dispute Resolution,  
Kingdom of Bahrain*

*Strategic Advisor, Dispute Resolution &  
Prevention  
Economic Development Board, Kingdom of  
Bahrain*



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## Panel 1

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### Building ADR Institutions in MENA: Insights from the SIDRA Surveys

#### Moderator



**Professor Nadja  
Alexander**

*Professor of Law  
(Yong Pung How  
School of Law,  
Singapore  
Management  
University);  
Director (SIDRA)*

Dr Nadja Alexander is Professor of Law and Director of the Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy at Singapore Management University. She holds honorary appointments in Australia and the United States.

Nadja has been engaged in diverse dispute resolution settings in more than 40 countries as trainer, policy-adviser, scholar and practitioner. A multi-award winning author and educator, she is consistently recognized as a global thought leader in the field of mediation (Who's Who Legal).

Most recently, in 2023 she was conferred the inaugural award for Outstanding International ADR Educator by the Asia Pacific Centre for Arbitration and Mediation. Over the years, Nadja has trained thousands of mediators throughout Asia, the Pacific, Australia, North America, the Middle East and Europe.

She holds positions on the International Advisory Board of the UN Office of the Ombudsman and the APEC lead academic working group for Online Dispute Resolution. Her expertise has directly contributed to the design and drafting of dispute resolution legislation across civil and common law jurisdictions.

In terms of research, Nadja is the primary investigator of SIDRA's International Dispute Resolution Empirical Research Programme and the Singapore Convention on Mediation Programme. In 2020 her peer reviewed article, '10 Trends in International Mediation' won an international award (Institution for Conflict Prevention and Resolution, New York). Her books include International and Comparative Mediation, The Singapore Convention on Mediation: A Commentary, and The EU Mediation Law Handbook.

## Panel 1

### Building ADR Institutions in MENA: Insights from the SIDRA Surveys

#### Speakers



**H.E. Dr. Sheikh  
Thani bin Ali Al-  
Thani**

*Vice Chairman of  
the Qatar  
International  
Center for  
Conciliation &  
Arbitration, and  
Founder (Thani bin  
Ali Al Thani Law  
Firm (Qatar))*

His Excellency Sheikh Thani bin Ali Al-Thani is a distinguished legal expert and founder of the Thani Bin Ali Al Thani Law Firm. He holds a Ph.D. in Commercial Law from Cairo University and brings decades of experience as a legal adviser and attorney to leading Qatari and international companies.

Renowned in the field of arbitration and dispute resolution, Sheikh Thani currently serves as a member of the Court of Arbitration at the ICC International Chamber of Commerce in Paris, representing the State of Qatar. He also sits on the boards of the Qatar International Center for Conciliation and Arbitration and the Gulf Cooperation Council Commercial Arbitration Center, overseeing international relations.

In Qatar, he chairs the Commission for the Social Responsibility of Companies under Dar Al Sharq and is a member of both the Commission of Conciliation and Arbitration at the Qatar Chamber and the Lawyers Association of the State of Qatar.

A prolific author and respected voice in legal scholarship, Sheikh Thani has published extensively across various legal disciplines. He is a frequent speaker at high-level conferences, workshops, and seminars in Qatar and abroad, contributing significantly to the global legal and arbitration community.



## Panel 1

# Building ADR Institutions in MENA: Insights from the SIDRA Surveys

### Speakers



**Dr. Emad  
Hussein**

*Senior Research  
Fellow, SIDRA;  
Independent  
Arbitrator,  
Accredited  
Mediator,  
Academic and  
Author (MENA)*

Dr. Emad Hussein is an international arbitrator, accredited mediator (CEDR, SIMI and IMI) and keen academic.

He is empanelled as an arbitrator with several international arbitral institutions such as the ICC, DIAC, ADCCAC, arbitrateAD, HKIAC, QICCA, CRCICA, SCCA, AAA-ICDR, LCICA and SIAC. He is also an empanelled mediator with the CAO, World Bank. He is an approved faculty member (AFL) with the CIArb and has trained several arbitrators and mediators under the fellowship route in collaboration with the SCCA. He also conducts regular ADR capacity-building trainings for members of the judiciary in Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Iraq in collaboration with the SCCA, Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP USA) and UNCITRAL. Additionally, he is also a Senior Fellow with the Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy (SIDRA) and Visting Lecturer with the Newcastle University. In these capacities, he leads research on the advancement of ADR in the MENA region. Additionally, he is a Senior Advisor with the CIMAC and also a member of the advisory board with the LCICA, OIC-AC, InnovADR and British University in Dubai.

He holds a PhD focusing on international commercial arbitration in the mainland UAE from the SOAS, University of London, UK, a PhD in Management from ISM, USA, an LLM in international arbitration from the Queen Mary University of London, UK and an LLM in mediation and international commercial dispute resolution from Newcastle University, UK.

## Panel 1

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### Building ADR Institutions in MENA: Insights from the SIDRA Surveys

#### Speakers



**Dr. Nasser Al-Adba**

*Managing Partner  
and Head  
(Arbitration, Omani  
& Partners LLP  
(Qatar))*

Dr. Nasser Al-Adba is the Managing Partner and Head of Arbitration at Omani & Partners LLP, and serves as Chair of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (Qatar Branch). He is also a full-time Professor of International Investment Law at Qatar University.

A recognized authority in international investment law and dispute resolution across the MENA region, Dr. Al-Adba has been appointed to the World Trade Organization (WTO) roster of panelists. His legal practice spans major construction contracts, international trade, and cross-border investment disputes.

Dr. Al-Adba brings extensive experience in international construction law, investment agreements, bilateral and multilateral treaty negotiations, public-private partnership (PPP) frameworks, concession and technology transfer agreements, as well as oil and gas contract review (including DPSA and EPSA models).

Renowned for his work as a negotiator, mediator, and arbitrator, Dr. Al-Adba plays a significant role in shaping the practice of investment arbitration and alternative dispute resolution both regionally and globally.

## Panel 1

# Building ADR Institutions in MENA: Insights from the SIDRA Surveys

### Speakers



**Mr. Hicham  
Zegrar**

*Secretary General  
(Casablanca  
International  
Mediation and  
Arbitration Centre  
(Morocco))*

Hicham Zegrar has served as Secretary-General of the Casablanca International Mediation & Arbitration Centre (CIMAC) since its inception in 2016. In this capacity, he oversees the institution's establishment, strategic growth, governance, and day-to-day operations.

He holds a Master of Public Affairs from Paris Dauphine University and graduated from the École Nationale d'Administration (Robert Badinter, Class of 2010). He is also preparing a PhD thesis focused on arbitration.

Starting his career at Microsoft North Africa in February 2002 as Legal Counsel in the Intellectual Property Department, he later joined Morocco's General Inspection of Finance in 2004, auditing state-owned entities and international-funded projects. In November 2010, Zegrar moved to Casablanca Finance City Authority, initially as Head of Legal Affairs and then, from January 2012, as Director of Operations & Institutional Affairs.

As CIMAC's Secretary-General, Zegrar chairs the organizing committee of the annual Casablanca Arbitration Days, a key platform curated to promote arbitration and mediation in Africa and beyond. Under his leadership, a landmark cooperation agreement was signed in November 2018 with the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID/CIRDI), enabling ICSID-administered hearings at CIMAC and fostering knowledge exchange and joint events.

Zegrar is a member of the ICCA (International Council for Commercial Arbitration), a participant in the ENA alumni network, and member of Association Droit et Commerce. He is dedicated to shaping CIMAC into a leading arbitration hub on the African continent by promoting confidentiality, efficiency, and the cultural adoption of dispute resolution outside traditional courts.

## Panel 1

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### Building ADR Institutions in MENA: Insights from the SIDRA Surveys

#### Speakers



**Ms. Mariam  
Gotsiridze**

*Principal  
Research  
Fellow (SIDRA)*

Ms. Mariam Gotsiridze is a lawyer specializing in international dispute settlement. Prior to joining SIDRA, Mariam worked for the government of Georgia. For 10 years (2012-2022) she was a Head of Department in the Ministry of Justice in charge of state representation in international arbitration.

Mariam has been involved in major investment and commercial arbitration matters before ICSID, ICC, SCC arbitrations, as well as before ad hoc arbitration under UNCITRAL rules. She has negotiated number of Bilateral Investment Treaties and Free Trade Agreements on behalf of Georgia.

Mariam was the Head of Delegation for Georgia in UNCITRAL Working Group III, in ICSID Rule amendment process and in Modernization of the Energy Charter Treaty. Mariam has contributed to legislative reforms and other developments in arbitration and mediation in Georgia.

She is also an accredited Level 1 mediator with the Singapore International Mediation Institute.

## Panel 1

# Building ADR Institutions in MENA: Insights from the SIDRA Surveys

### Speakers



**Professor Marike  
Paulsson**

*Secretary General,  
Council  
International  
Dispute Resolution,  
Kingdom of Bahrain*

*Strategic Advisor,  
Dispute Resolution &  
Prevention  
Economic  
Development Board,  
Kingdom of Bahrain*

Professor Marike Paulsson is the Secretary General of the Council for International Dispute Resolution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the Vice Chairperson of the Board of Trustees at the Bahrain Chamber for Dispute Resolution. She further holds advisory positions at the Economic Development Board in Bahrain and with Albright Stonebridge Group in Washington, DC.

With over twenty years of practice and academic experience in public international law, international arbitration, cross-border litigation, commercial diplomacy and human rights, Professor Paulsson draws on her extensive experience to advise on the resolution of investment and commercial disputes through global strategy and commercial diplomacy.

She is the Vice President for North America of the Global Legal Institute for Peace of the University of São Paulo, and has been appointed Vice-President for North America of the Mauritius Arbitration & Mediation Centre. She is a member of the jury for the Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa Global Award for Women's Empowerment.

Professor Paulsson is the author of the treatise on the United Nations Convention on the Enforcement and Recognition of Foreign Arbitral Awards, the '1958 New York Convention in Action'. She is an editor and co-author of the ICCA (International Council for Commercial Arbitration) Guide on the New York Convention and the treatise International Arbitration in India. She writes and teaches on the topic and has assisted in the drafting of numerous expert opinions on the Convention. She is a member of the Judiciary Committee of the ICCA and co-founded the ICCA NYC Roadshow for the purposes of which experts familiarize and conduct dialogues with members of the judiciary around the world with the application of the Convention in the national space.

She is a visiting professor with the University of Miami, the University of Sao Paolo and Jindal Global University in Delhi.

Earlier in her career, Professor Paulsson served as Counsel at Hanotiau & van den Berg in Brussels and held Associate positions at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and Allen & Overy in Amsterdam. She was the Founding Director of the Miami International Arbitration Institute. She graduated from Leiden University School of Law, holds an L.L.M in International Law from the University of Miami School of Law, and has a diploma from Sciences Po, Paris, where she studied political science. She speaks five languages and is a member and past member of the Dutch, Bahraini, and Belgian bar associations.

She is based in Manama, Bahrain.



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## Panel 2

### Legislative Reform and ADR in MENA: Opportunities and Trends

This session will explore the modernisation of arbitration and mediation laws across the MENA region, highlighting reforms in the Gulf region. Set within a comparative context, it examines how Singapore's adoption of the UNCITRAL Model Law has fostered a reliable, enforceable, and internationally aligned dispute resolution framework.

Panellists will discuss regional harmonisation, treaty accession such as the Singapore Convention on Mediation, and policy mechanisms to strengthen legal coherence. Drawing on common and civil law examples, they will propose reforms tailored to MENA's commercial realities, with emphasis on integrated frameworks bridging litigation, arbitration, and mediation.

#### Moderator



**Mr. Francis Goh (FCIArb, FSIArb)**

*IMI and SIMI Certified Mediator*

*IMI Certified Mediation Advocate*

*Trainer, Coach, Assessor, Mentor*

*SIDRA Research Fellow*

#### Speakers



**Ms. Swati Jhaveri**

*Director & Head (Planning, Development & Research) (Singapore International Arbitration Centre)*



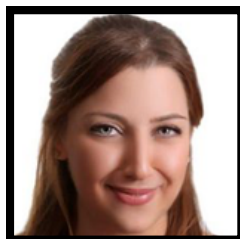
**Dr. Judith Knieper**

*Legal Officer (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL))*



**H.E. Counsellor Yousef Saeed Al Kuwaiti**

*Executive Director (Legal and Government Affairs Sector, Department of Municipalities and Transport) (Government of Abu Dhabi)*



**Ms. Maria Mazzawi**

*Registrar (Abu Dhabi International Arbitration Centre) (arbitrateAD)*



**Dr. Ahmad Essam Alozn**

*Co-Founder - The Mediation Hub MENA, and Chair of the Construction Mediation Committee*

## Panel 2

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### Legislative Reform and ADR in MENA: Opportunities and Trends

#### Moderator



**Mr. Francis Goh**  
**(FCIArb, FSIArb)**

*IMI and SIMI  
Certified Mediator*

*IMI Certified  
Mediation Advocate*

*Trainer, Coach,  
Assessor, Mentor*

*SIDRA Research  
Fellow*

A full-time mediator, Mr. Francis Goh brings with him over three decades of experience as an advocate and solicitor, arbitrator and mediator, applying a problem-solving mindset to dispute resolution.

A graduate of the National University of Singapore, he was called to the Singapore Bar in 1991 and has since maintained a pioneering presence in dispute resolution.

An accredited Mediator since 2001, Francis is an early adopter of mediation, both as counsel and mediator. Francis pioneered the art of mediation advocacy and brings a problem-solving mindset to dispute resolution. Francis is adept at the mediation process to help parties negotiate win-win outcomes for their disputes.

Francis is a Principal Mediator at the Singapore Mediation Centre, a Specialist Mediator and Ambassador at the Singapore International Mediation Centre, a Senior Mediator with the Law Society Mediation Scheme, and an accredited mediator and mediation advocate with both the Singapore International Mediation Institute and the International Mediation Institute. He also serves as an International Mediator with the AAA-ICDR and Sage Mediation. He is as an adjudicator with the Financial Industry Dispute Resolution Centre.



## Panel 2

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### Legislative Reform and ADR in MENA: Opportunities and Trends

#### Speakers



**Ms. Swati Jhaveri**

*Director & Head  
(Planning,  
Development &  
Research)  
(Singapore  
International  
Arbitration Centre)*

In her role as Director & Head (Planning, Development & Research), Ms. Swati Jhaveri is responsible for driving the strategic planning, research, thought leadership and publications, knowledge management and case management innovation initiatives of SIAC.

Working closely with colleagues across the Strategy & Development, Secretariat and Marketing and Events teams, she also steers the design and development of SIAC's programming, outreach and engagement activities and events.

Swati has a background in both legal practice and the teaching and research of law having worked at legal practices and academic institutions in Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and the US. She is qualified to practice in Hong Kong SAR and England & Wales.



## Panel 2

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### Legislative Reform and ADR in MENA: Opportunities and Trends

#### Speakers



#### **Dr. Judith Knieper**

*Legal Officer  
(United Nations  
Commission on  
International Trade  
Law (UNCITRAL))*

Dr. Judith Knieper is a legal officer at UNCITRAL, based in Vienna, Austria, where she is responsible for the UNCITRAL Transparency Standards and the Transparency Registry—an initiative supported by the European Union and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID).

With 28 years of professional experience, Dr. Knieper has worked extensively across Southeast Europe, serving as a legal consultant for international organizations including the OSCE, Council of Europe, World Bank, and GIZ (German international cooperation). She led two regional projects on the CISG and Alternative Dispute Resolution for GIZ.

Dr. Knieper holds both German State Examinations in Law and earned her PhD in law from Frankfurt, Germany.

## Panel 2

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### Legislative Reform and ADR in MENA: Opportunities and Trends

#### Speakers



**H.E. Counsellor Yousef  
Saeed Al Kuwaiti**

*Executive Director  
(Legal and  
Government Affairs  
Sector, Department of  
Municipalities and  
Transport)  
(Government of Abu  
Dhabi)*

Currently serves as the Executive Director of the Legal and Government Affairs Sector at the Department of Municipalities and Transport (DMT) in the Government of Abu Dhabi. He is also a legal advisor, arbitrator, and mediator specializing in dispute resolution through mediation and negotiation. With an extensive career spanning over 20 years in the government sector, he plays a leading role in driving legal, regulatory, and digital transformation, contributing significantly to the development of legislative frameworks in alignment with the vision of the Abu Dhabi Government and the evolving requirements of the modern era.

His expertise is particularly prominent in managing legal affairs and legislative sectors, having held significant leadership positions within the Department of Urban Planning and Municipalities and the Department of Municipal Affairs and Transport. He has also led specialized teams in drafting laws and executive regulations for the real estate sector, such as the Building Regulation Law and the Law Regulating the Real Estate Sector in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Furthermore, he has chaired high-level committees, including the Supreme Legislative Committee at the Department of Urban Planning and Municipalities and the Real Estate Dispute Resolution Committee in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, in addition to being an active member of numerous specialized committees that have had a profound impact on enhancing the legal and regulatory environment in Abu Dhabi.

Counsellor Yousef Al Kuwaiti is a registered arbitrator at the Abu Dhabi Commercial Conciliation and Arbitration Centre, and has participated in several arbitration cases. He has also actively contributed to drafting and formulating critical regulations, such as the Executive Regulation of Public Auctions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. His professional career has been further enriched by his participation as a speaker and trainer in numerous forums and seminars across the legal and real estate sectors.

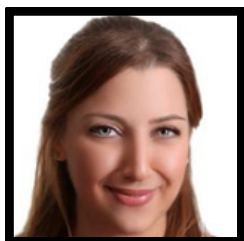
He holds a Bachelor's degree in Sharia and Law from the United Arab Emirates University and has built a professional career spanning more than two decades. Throughout his journey, he has successfully combined academic knowledge with practical expertise, offering a unique blend of legal insight, regulatory foresight, and legislative vision.

## Panel 2

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### Legislative Reform and ADR in MENA: Opportunities and Trends

#### Speakers



**Ms. Maria Mazzawi**

*Registrar  
(Abu Dhabi  
International  
Arbitration Centre)  
(arbitrateAD)*

Ms. Maria Mazzawi is the Registrar of the Abu Dhabi International Arbitration Centre (arbitrateAD) and a senior arbitration practitioner with a deep-rooted presence in the Middle East dispute resolution landscape. She is also a practising arbitrator, a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb), and was recognized in The Legal 500 Private Practice Arbitration Powerlist 2022: Middle East as one of the region's leading arbitration lawyers.

Maria's practice spans international commercial arbitration and litigation, with expertise in construction and technology-related disputes. Her work is often multijurisdictional, covering UAE law as well as other Middle Eastern legal systems, and includes contentious and non-contentious matters, transactional advisory, and pre-dispute strategy.

Fluent in Arabic, English, and French, Maria is an active contributor to the arbitration community and a frequent speaker at regional and international conferences. Her commentary and analysis have been featured in publications such as Khaleej Times, Arabian Business, Emirates Law, and Lexis Nexis. She is also the author of a widely cited analysis on the UAE Federal Arbitration Law, published in the International Journal of Arab Arbitration, and has co-authored a chapter for Global Arbitration Review on arbitration in new technology disputes—including those involving virtual currency, NFTs, data, and AI.

Maria holds an LLM in Alternative Dispute Resolution from Queen Mary University of London, with a focus on international construction and commercial contracts, and a postgraduate diploma in International Commercial Arbitration from CIArb.

## Panel 2

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### Legislative Reform and ADR in MENA: Opportunities and Trends

#### Speakers



**Dr. Ahmad Essam  
Alozn**

*Co-Founder -  
The Mediation Hub  
MENA, and Chair of  
the Construction  
Mediation  
Committee*

Dr. Ahmad Essam Alozn is a leading expert in alternative dispute resolution (ADR), contracts, and commercial management, currently serving as Disputes Chief at the Dubai Roads & Transport Authority (RTA). He also acts independently as an arbitrator, mediator, adjudicator, and litigator, and is Co-Founder of The Mediation Hub MENA—a regional platform launched during Dubai Arbitration Week 2024 to promote mediation and awarded the Law Community Advancement Award at The Law's Finest 2024.

Dr. Alozn's career spans both public and private sectors, with prior leadership roles at Wasl Asset Management and Dubai Municipality. In academia, he has served as a lecturer at Masdar Institute (now Khalifa University) and was seconded as a course instructor at MIT, where he taught on sustainable cities and renewable energy in hot climates.

Holding a unique interdisciplinary academic background, Dr. Alozn earned a PhD in Interdisciplinary Engineering focused on commercial arbitration, alongside an MSc in Civil Engineering, a Master's in Construction Law & Dispute Resolution, and an MBA in Finance.

He is a prolific researcher, with publications on evidence admissibility in arbitration and decision-making frameworks in construction disputes, and serves as a peer reviewer for journals such as ASCE Legal Affairs and Dispute Resolution and Conflict Resolution Quarterly. A regular voice in the professional community, Dr. Alozn shares insights on negotiation, leadership, mediation, and the role of AI in ADR through publications and commentary, particularly via LinkedIn.

## Panel 3

### Judicial Engagement and ADR in MENA and Singapore

This session will address the pivotal role of the judiciary in supporting arbitration and mediation. The session aims to provoke insights on what is working well, what needs to change and how courts can become champions of effective dispute resolution. Special emphasis will be placed on the importance of judicial consistency in interpreting ADR clauses, the role of high courts in shaping ADR jurisprudence, and how courts across the MENA region can become partners in the region's evolving dispute resolution architecture.

#### Moderators



**Dr. Mark McLaughlin**

*Assistant Professor of Law (Research) (Yong Pung How School of Law, Singapore Management University); SIDRA*



**Dr. Emad Hussein**

*Senior Research Fellow, SIDRA; Independent Arbitrator, Accredited Mediator, Academic and Author (MENA)*

#### Speakers



**H.E. Judge Dr. Mohammed Obaid Al Kaabi**

*Chairman of Sharjah Judicial Department (United Arab Emirates)*



**Justice Andre Francis Maniam**

*High Court Judge (Singapore)*



**H.E. Judge Dr. Ahmad Abdullah Al Jaffari**

*Counsellor and Arbitrator | Former President of the Commercial Court (Dammam - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)*

## Panel 3

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### Judicial Engagement and ADR in MENA and Singapore

#### Moderators



#### Dr. Mark McLaughlin

*Assistant Professor of Law (Research) (Yong Pung How School of Law, Singapore Management University); SIDRA*

Dr. Mark McLaughlin is an Assistant Professor of Law at Singapore Management University and the Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy. His research focuses on the reform of arbitration and mediation, international economic law, and the intersection of law and technology.

Mark has been a trainer for government officials around the world in managing their investment treaty commitments and navigating investor-state disputes. In 2022, he became a member of the ISDS Academic Forum. He has published in leading international journals on novel areas of law, such as investor-state mediation, state-owned enterprises, and artificial intelligence.

He holds an LL.B. from the University of Glasgow and a Ph.D. from the China University of Political Science and Law, where he was a lecturer in international investment law. Mark was awarded a Chinese Government Scholarship from 2016-2019. He is also an accredited Level 1 mediator with the Singapore International Mediation Institute.

## Panel 3

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### Judicial Engagement and ADR in MENA and Singapore

#### Moderators



**Dr. Emad Hussein**

*Senior Research  
Fellow, SIDRA;  
Independent  
Arbitrator, Accredited  
Mediator, Academic  
and Author (MENA)*

Dr. Emad Hussein is an international arbitrator, accredited mediator (CEDR, SIMI and IMI) and keen academic.

He is empanelled as an arbitrator with several international arbitral institutions such as the ICC, DIAC, ADCCAC, arbitrateAD, HKIAC, QICCA, CRCICA, SCCA, AAA-ICDR, LCICA and SIAC. He is also an empanelled mediator with the CAO, World Bank. He is an approved faculty member (AFL) with the CIArb and has trained several arbitrators and mediators under the fellowship route in collaboration with the SCCA. He also conducts regular ADR capacity-building trainings for members of the judiciary in Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Iraq in collaboration with the SCCA, Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP USA) and UNCITRAL. Additionally, he is also a Senior Fellow with the Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy (SIDRA) and Visting Lecturer with the Newcastle University. In these capacities, he leads research on the advancement of ADR in the MENA region. Additionally, he is a Senior Advisor with the CIMAC and also a member of the advisory board with the LCICA, OIC-AC, InnovADR and British University in Dubai.

He holds a PhD focusing on international commercial arbitration in the mainland UAE from the SOAS, University of London, UK, a PhD in Management from ISM, USA, an LLM in international arbitration from the Queen Mary University of London, UK and an LLM in mediation and international commercial dispute resolution from Newcastle University, UK.



## Panel 3

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### Judicial Engagement and ADR in MENA and Singapore

#### Speakers



**H.E. Judge Dr.  
Mohammed Obaid Al  
Kaabi**

*Chairman of Sharjah  
Judicial Department  
(United Arab  
Emirates)*

His Excellency Judge Dr. Mohamed Obeid AlKaabi is Chairman of the Sharjah Judicial Department and brings over two decades of distinguished service to the judiciary in the United Arab Emirates. Throughout his judicial career, he has played a transformative role in advancing justice and modernising the legal framework to meet the evolving needs of society.

Renowned for his forward-thinking leadership, Judge AlKaabi has championed innovation in the legal system, with a particular focus on integrating technology, enhancing legislative responsiveness, and promoting the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms such as reconciliation and settlement. His vision is grounded in building a judicial system that is efficient, future-ready, and aligned with global best practices.

He previously served as President of the Fujairah and Sharjah Federal Courts of First Instance and as Director of the Strategy and Future Foresight Department at the Ministry of Justice. Judge AlKaabi holds a Bachelor's degree in Sharia and Law from the United Arab Emirates University (1992), a Master's degree in Criminal Law (2004), and a Ph.D. in Criminal Law (2008), both from Cairo University.



## Panel 3

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### Judicial Engagement and ADR in MENA and Singapore

#### Speakers



**Justice Andre  
Francis Maniam**

*High Court Judge  
(Singapore)*

Justice Andre Francis Maniam was appointed Judicial Commissioner of the Supreme Court on 4 May 2020 and elevated to High Court Judge on 1 November 2021.

He graduated from the National University of Singapore (LL.B., Hons.), earning the Adrian Clark Memorial Medal as the top student in his cohort. Following graduation, he served as a Justices' Law Clerk at the Supreme Court before entering private practice. As Head of the Litigation & Dispute Resolution Group at Wong Partnership and appointed Senior Counsel in January 2010, he charted nearly three decades of distinguished experience in litigation, arbitration, and mediation.

His practice area spanned a wide spectrum including administrative and constitutional law, arbitration, insolvency, commercial and corporate disputes, cross-border trade, and regulatory and financial crime matters. Justice Maniam has also served on the panels of the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC), the Asian International Arbitration Centre (AIAC), and is a specialist mediator on the panel of the Singapore International Mediation Centre (SIMC).

Active in legal leadership, he co-chairs the Professional Affairs & Membership Committee of the Singapore Academy of Law.

## Panel 3

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### Judicial Engagement and ADR in MENA and Singapore

#### Speakers



**H.E. Judge Dr.  
Ahmad Abdullah Al  
Jaffari**

*Counsellor and  
Arbitrator | Former  
President of the  
Commercial Court  
(Dammam -  
Kingdom of Saudi  
Arabia)*

His Excellency Judge Dr. Ahmad Abdullah Al Jaaffari possesses a distinguished judicial career spanning over a quarter of a century, dedicated to the service of justice. Throughout this extensive journey, he has combined judicial service with academic research and significantly contributed to advancing the judicial system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Prior to his recent retirement, Dr. Al Jaaffari held several high-ranking judicial positions, most notably serving as the President of the Commercial Court in Dammam. During his tenure, he was instrumental in enhancing the efficiency of the commercial judiciary and aligning it with the evolving demands of the Kingdom's investment landscape. His contributions extended beyond adjudication of cases; he actively served as a subject-matter expert in the drafting of judicial laws and regulations.

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