

## Sonia Guimaraes Bessa

### Legal Consultant

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Sonia joined Afridi & Angell in 2017. Her practice encompasses a broad range of services, including, private client work, dispute resolution and business set up in the UAE.

Sonia has regularly advised Brazilian and South American businesses on various aspects of doing business in the UAE.

Sonia has been registered as Wills Draftsman with the DIFC Wills Service Centre since 2018. Sonia advises clients on inheritance laws and the enforceability of Wills.

Sonia also has experience and assists in a variety of contentious matters involving arbitration (DIFC-LCIA, DIAC and *ad hoc*) as well as court litigation before the UAE onshore courts and the DIFC courts.

Prior to joining Afridi & Angell, Sonia gained in-depth experience working as a consultant in the litigation department for a well-known UAE law firm. Before that, she worked for a number of years as Attorney-Corporate for Schlumberger Oilfield Services, in Dubai.

### Representative Transactions

Foreign Investment and Business set up:

- Advised a Brazilian poultry business on requirements for establishing commercial farm in the UAE.
- Advised a large South American gemstone company on sale of goods in the UAE.
- Advised a South American fruit and vegetable conglomerate on export of product to the UAE.
- Advised a South American based design-studio, interior design and furniture manufacturers on options for setting up and selling products in the UAE.
- Undertook due diligence on a large commodity trade transaction, advised and alerted first time Brazilian exporters on an attempt to defraud them.
- Regular participant in Latin American and APEX-BRASIL forums

### Admissions and Affiliations

- Bar Association of Brazil, State of Minas Gerais.
- Rights of audience before the Supreme Court, Brazil.
- Registered as Part I Legal Practitioner, DIFC Court.
- Registered Wills Draftsman with the DIFC Wills Service Centre.
- Associate Member, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.
- Advanced Trial Advocacy Course certificate (Outer Temple Chambers, administered at the DIFC Courts) - 2019.

### Education

- LL.M., Fordham University, New York
- Bachelor of Law, Faculdade de Direito Milton Campos, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

### Languages

- English
- Portuguese
- French
- Spanish (Intermediate)

## Private client/wills and estate planning

- Coordination and consultation with the Dubai, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi Judicial Department and Ras Al Khaimah Courts and other relevant governmental and municipal authorities to identify and assess issues relating to making wills for non-Muslims.
- Advising a Dubai based European couple on issues of distribution of worldwide assets; drafted and registered Mirror Wills.
- Advising an Abu Dhabi based North American couple on matters relating to guardianship laws; distribution of assets; executorship and registration of individual and Mirror Wills in the DIFC.
- Advised a client on status of Dubai Notary Will in conjunction with DIFC Will; effect of revocation clauses; and deregistration of Dubai Notary Will.
- Advising clients from different countries (including, France, Germany, Japan, Belgium, United States, India) on the registration of DIFC Wills.
- Consulted with and gave recommendations to the DIFC Wills Registry on public awareness of the Wills Service.

## Dispute Resolution

- Lead role in defence of first ever personal injury claim brought before the DIFC Court.
- Assisted in preparations and attended hearings for applications for discharge of DIFC court freezing orders/injunctions.
- Assisted in a high-value dispute under DIAC arbitration rules involving claims for prolongation and variations under contract for the construction of a hotel project.
- Assisted lead counsel in DIFC-LCIA arbitration involving disputes arising from the termination of an international automobile dealership.
- Assisted and directed strategy in Dubai Court litigation involving claims arising from the sale of a residential building tower in the Dubai Marina.
- Advised and assisted foreign counsel in respect of a dispute over ownership of Intellectual Property rights involving multiple jurisdictions.
- Advised Turkish contractor in respect of a dispute with a Saudi joint venture partner involving the construction of a factory in Iraq.
- Acted as a volunteer pro bono consultant on criminal cases involving foreign national defendants prosecuted in Dubai.