

# INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL FAMILY LAW CONFERENCE Kuwait

29 – 31 March 2026

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## PROGRAMME

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*Join leading international family lawyers in Kuwait for an extraordinary exploration of family law across the Middle East and beyond. This landmark conference brings together experts from diverse legal backgrounds to examine the complex intersection of religious, civil, and international family law.*

### DAY 1: SUNDAY, 29 MARCH 2026

#### WELCOME RECEPTION

**Venue:** Kuwait Bar Association

**Time:** Afternoon (exact time to be confirmed)

**Master of Ceremony:** Carolina Marín Pedreño (IAFL), Partner at Dawson Cornwell LLP (United Kingdom)

Delivered by **Heather Hostetter (IAFL)**, President of the International Academy of Family Lawyers, and **Adnan Mahmoud Abul**, President of the Kuwait Bar Association.

*Begin your conference journey with a warm reception at the prestigious Kuwait Bar Association. This opening evening offers an invaluable opportunity to connect with fellow delegates, distinguished speakers, and members of the organising committee. Forge new professional relationships and reunite with international colleagues in the heart of Kuwait City.*

### DAY 2: MONDAY, 30 MARCH 2026

#### CONFERENCE SESSIONS

1:00 PM - 1:30 PM | INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY LAW IN KUWAIT

**Jumanah Adnan Behbehani (IAFL)**, Head of International Legal Organisations Centre at Kuwait Bar Association  
*Gain essential insights into the foundations and recent developments shaping Kuwaiti family law. This session provides the perfect foundation for the comparative discussions that follow.*

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM | PANEL SESSION I: **FAMILY LAW IN THE MIDDLE EAST: PRACTICE AND STRUCTURE**

A fascinating exploration of how family law operates across Middle Eastern jurisdictions, examining:

- Religious courts - are the adjudicators lawyers?
- State courts applying religious laws
- Separate courts for different religious sects
- Oversight by the secular supreme court of religious courts
- Civil family law frameworks

**Panel:**

**Jumanah Adnan Behbehani** (IAFL)- Head of International Legal Organisations Centre, Kuwait Bar Association (Kuwait)

**Hachem El Housseini** (IAFL)- Partner, Abou Jaoude & Associates Law Firm (Lebanon)

**Elham Ali Hassan** (IAFL)- Founding Partner, Elham Ali Hassan & Associates (Bahrain)

**Diana Hamade AlGhurair** (IAFL)- Founder, Diana Hamade Attorneys at Law (United Arab Emirates)

### 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM | COFFEE BREAK & NETWORKING

*Take this opportunity to continue conversations and expand your international network.*

### 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM | PANEL SESSION II: **RECOGNITION AND ENFORCEMENT OF FOREIGN ORDERS**

Navigate the complex landscape of cross-border enforcement as experts address:

- How receiving countries in the Middle East and elsewhere view foreign orders (reciprocity)
- What if the order is from a religious court?
- Requirements for applying foreign law in local jurisdictions
- Distinction between state-authorized religious courts and private religious courts without state authority
- Status and effect of private, Islamic, or unregistered marriages

#### Panel:

**Hassan Elhais** (IAFL)- Senior Legal Consultant, Awatif Mohammad Shoqi Advocates & Legal Consultancy (United Arab Emirates)

**Karim El Chazli** (IAFL)- Staff Legal Adviser, Swiss Institute of Comparative Law (Switzerland/Egypt)

**Sandra Davis** (IAFL) - Partner, Mishcon de Reya LLP (United Kingdom)

**Caroline Harnois** (IAFL) - Partner, Lavery, de Billy (Canada)

**Sarah Al-Jourani** - Irwin Mitchell LLP (United Kingdom)

### 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM | PANEL SESSION III: **PARENTING TIME, GUARDIANSHIP, AND THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD**

Examine child-centred approaches across diverse legal traditions:

- Definitions of parenting time and guardianship across jurisdictions
- Consideration of the child's best interests
- Voice of the child - how it is heard and weighted
- Influence of age, sex, and religion of the parents

#### Panel:

**Awatif Al Khouri** (IAFL)- Advocate, Awatif Mohammad Shoqi Advocates & Legal Consultancy (United Arab Emirates)

**Ahmed Hassan Elattar** (IAFL)- Founder, El Attar Law Firm (Egypt)

**Rahima Nato-Kalfane** (IAFL)- Partner, BWG Associés (France)

**Reem Alzadjali** (IAFL)- Principal Lawyer, Reem Al Zadjali Lawyers and Legal Consultants (Oman)

**Mukhtar Gharib** (IAFL) - Senior Advocate, Found & CEO, ALGHARIB & Partners LLC (United Arab Emirates)

**Manal Almansoori** - Manal Issa Al Mansoori Law Firm and Legal Consultants (Qatar)

### 7:00 PM | DINNER

*Restaurant venue to be announced in due course. Join us for an evening of fine dining and continued conversation.*

*Please confirm if you would like a space at the dinner by emailing [Barbara Nayler \(iafl@judylaneics.com\)](mailto:iafl@judylaneics.com) by no later than 2 March 2026.*

## DAY 3: TUESDAY, 31 MARCH 2026 - CLOSING SESSIONS

### 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM | PANEL SESSION IV: **FINANCES AND ADR IN FAMILY LAW**

Discover innovative approaches to financial matters and dispute resolution:

- Prenuptial, postnuptial, and marital settlement agreements

- Rights under common law, civil law, and Sharia
- Use of ADR (mediation, arbitration) to overcome jurisdictional differences
- Enforceability of ADR outcomes across jurisdictions

**Panel:**

**Fayza Moukaddem** - Lawyer & Advisor, Bar of Lawyers of Tripoli (Lebanon)

**Abed Awad** (IAFL) - Partner, Awad & Khoury LLP (United States)

**Pol Martin Gonzalez Mansilla** - Mansilla & Llop Abogados (Barcelona, Spain)

**Zenobia du Toit** (IAFL) - Director, Miller du Toit Cloete Incorporated (South Africa)

**2:00 PM - 2:30 PM | KEYNOTE PRESENTATION (PENDING CONFIRMATION): *THE MALTA PROCESS AND THE HAGUE CONVENTION - A COMPARATIVE SYNTHESIS***

**Philippe Lortie**, First Secretary at the HCCH, explores how the Hague Convention on Private International Law (HCCH) family law conventions operate in harmony with Sharia law, offering a unique comparative perspective that draws together the themes of the preceding panels.

**2:30PM PM | CLOSING REMARKS**

Delivered by **Heather Hostetter** (IAFL), President of the International Academy of Family Lawyers, and **Adnan Mahmoud Abul**, President of the Kuwait Bar Association.

**RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION**

**AL HAMRA HOTEL KUWAIT**

**Address:** Jamal Abdul Nasser Street, Kuwait City

**Website:** [www.alhamrahotel.com.kw](http://www.alhamrahotel.com.kw)

**THE ST. REGIS KUWAIT**

**Address:** Fahd Al Salem Street, Kuwait City

**Website:** [www.marriott.com/stregis-kuwait](http://www.marriott.com/stregis-kuwait)

**Telephone:** +965 2298 2000

**REGISTRATION DETAILS**

For lawyers in Kuwait and in the region - please register your attendance by emailing [kuwait.bar.association@gmail.com](mailto:kuwait.bar.association@gmail.com)

For speakers and IAFL Fellows invited to attend - please register your attendance by emailing [iafl@judylaneics.com](mailto:iafl@judylaneics.com)

**Please register your attendance by no later than 2 March 2026.**