

Riyad Awada
Employee
7271044

[Employee-related decision Date: 29 August 2025](#)

Decision - Employee-related decision

Outcome: Control of non-qualified staff (Section 43 / Section 99 order)

Outcome date: 29 August 2025

Published date: 8 September 2025

Firm details

Firm or organisation at date of publication and at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Dentons & Co

Address(es): Level 4, Trade Centre, West Tower Abu Dhabi Mall, Abu Dhabi

Firm ID: 310498

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Mr Awada is a non-authorised person, who, at the time of his arrest, was employed as a Government Liaison Officer at the United Arab Emirates (UAE) offices of Dentons & Co (the firm). The firm is a recognised body.

On 6 August 2024 Mr Awada arrived at Zayed International Airport in the UAE from Lebanon and was arrested and charged with drugs-related offences. He initially denied knowledge of the contents of his bags but later confessed that the drugs found in his possession were for his personal use.

In October 2024, Mr Awada was convicted of (i) importing narcotic substances and cocaine from outside the country to inside in unauthorised circumstances, and (ii) importing the psychotropic substance (amphetamine) from outside the country to inside in unauthorised circumstances. He was sentenced to 10 years'



imprisonment and fined 120,000 Dirham. His appeals to the Court of Appeal and Court of Cassation in Abu Dhabi were both dismissed.

Even though the conviction was unconnected to legal practice, it was found that Mr Awada's serious misconduct meant it was undesirable for him to be involved in a legal practice in future without the SRA's prior approval.

Reasons/basis

An order pursuant to section 43(2) of the Solicitors Act 1974 was imposed with immediate effect.

This was because of the serious nature of his criminal conviction, and the likely damage to public confidence in the delivery of legal services.

Mr Awada was also ordered to pay a proportion of the SRA's costs of £600.

Other information

What our Section 43 order means

- i. no solicitor shall employ or remunerate him in connection with his/her practice as a solicitor;
- ii. no employee of a solicitor shall employ or remunerate him in connection with the solicitor's practice;
- iii. no recognised body shall employ or remunerate him;
- iv. no manager or employee of a recognised body shall employ or remunerate him in connection with the business of that body;
- v. no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit him to be a manager of the body; and
- vi. no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit him to have an interest in the body

except in accordance with the SRA's prior written permission.

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