Cross-Border Enforcement Center - Saudi Arabia

| Contents |
| --- |
| To generate table of contents, right-click here and select **Update Field.** |

# Judgments

## With which jurisdictions does this country have reciprocal arrangements for enforcement of judgments?

**Riyadh Convention 1983:**

Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

**GCC Convention 1995:**

Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates

## If there is no reciprocal arrangement, is it still possible to enforce a foreign judgment by means of a writ on the judgment, declaration of enforceability or similar mechanism?

Per the Enforcement Law issued according to Royal Decree M/53 dated 3/7/2012G (the “**Enforcement Law**”), to enforce a court judgment from a jurisdiction other than those with which Saudi Arabia has agreements for the mutual enforcement of judgments, the enforcement court must have evidence that the issuing jurisdiction enforces Saudi judgments, i.e., the reciprocity principle.  From our experience, obtaining such evidence can be difficult and involves sending a request to the Saudi Ministry of Justice to verify reciprocity, which can take considerable time to respond to and confirmations may change from time to time. Historically, attempts to enforce foreign judgments in Saudi Arabia have generally been unsuccessful.

## What is the approximate time required to register and enforce a foreign judgment if unopposed?

If the foreign judgment was issued from a Jurisdiction with which Saudi Arabia has an agreement for the mutual enforcement of judgments and the judgment meets certain criteria (e.g., does not contravene Sharia Law or public policy, is final (non-appealable), and proper notification to the respondent had been given in the underlying proceeding), then enforcement could occur within a few months of initiating the enforcement process.

For foreign judgments issued from a jurisdiction with which Saudi Arabia does not have any bilateral enforcement agreement, it is extremely difficult to provide a timeline. The process can be very protracted and may take several years and such a judgment may ultimately not be enforceable if the reciprocity principle is not met.

## What is the approximate time required to register and enforce a foreign judgment if opposed?

If the foreign judgment was issued from a Jurisdiction with which Saudi Arabia has an agreement for the mutual enforcement of judgments and the judgment meets certain criteria (e.g., does not contravene Sharia Law or public policy, is final (non-appealable), and proper notification to the respondent had been given in the underlying proceeding), it may take several months to years depending on the factual and legal issues that are raised by the respondent.

For foreign judgments issued from a jurisdiction with which Saudi Arabia does not have any bilateral enforcement agreement, it is extremely difficult to provide a timeline. The process can be very protracted and may take several years and such a judgment may ultimately not be enforceable if the reciprocity principle is not met.

## What is the approximate cost of registering and enforcing a foreign judgment (including court fees and other disbursements) if unopposed?

Court fees are minimal in Saudi Arabia.  Legal fees would vary significantly depending on whether travel is necessary to attend hearings, duration of the proceeding, availability of enforceable assets, and complexity of underlying issues.

## What is the approximate cost of registering and enforcing a foreign judgment (including court fees and other disbursements) if opposed?

Court fees are minimal in Saudi Arabia.  Legal fees would vary significantly depending on whether travel is necessary to attend hearings, duration of the proceeding, availability of enforceable assets, and complexity of underlying issues.

## Are there any unusual difficulties in enforcing a foreign judgment?

According to the Enforcement Law, to enforce court judgments from a jurisdiction that does not have an agreement with Saudi Arabia for the mutual enforcement of judgments, the enforcement court must have evidence that the issuing jurisdiction enforces Saudi judgments (the reciprocity principle).  Obtaining such evidence can be very difficult and involves sending a request to the Saudi Ministry of Justice to verify reciprocity, which can take considerable time to respond to.

Moreover, Saudi Enforcement courts will not enforce a foreign judgment if the enforcement is contrary to Sharia (Islamic law) or public policy. The list of matters that would be deemed to contravene public policy is not well-defined and individual judges may reach conflicting results in similar cases.  However, from our experience, enforcement judges tend to enforce an award unless it contravenes a fundamental principle of Sharia. An award of interest, for example, is prohibited by Sharia and thus is unenforceable.   An award of interest is severable, however, and does not invalidate the enforcement of other portions of the award.

# Arbitration Awards

## Is this jurisdiction a party to the New York Convention?

Yes.

## What is the approximate time required to register and enforce a foreign arbitration award if unopposed?

Generally speaking, it can take 3 to 6 months to enforce a straightforward, unopposed foreign arbitration award.

## What is the approximate time required to register and enforce a foreign arbitration award if opposed?

It is extremely difficult to provide an approximate time to enforce a foreign arbitration award that is being opposed because it would depend on several factors such as the factual background, complexity of legal issues used to oppose, and so forth.

## What is the approximate cost of registering and enforcing a foreign arbitration award (including court fees and other disbursements) if unopposed?

Court fees are minimal in Saudi Arabia.  Legal fees would vary significantly depending on whether travel is necessary to attend hearings, duration of the proceeding, availability of enforceable assets, and complexity of underlying issues.

## What is the approximate cost of registering and enforcing a foreign arbitration award (including court fees and other disbursements) if opposed?

The cost would depend on several factors, including the complexity of the issues, the level of opposition.

## Are there any unusual difficulties in enforcing a foreign arbitration award?

Saudi courts will not enforce arbitration awards that are contrary to Sharia (Islamic law) or public policy.

Award of interest is prohibited under Sharia, and thus unenforceable.  An award of interest is, however, severable and does not invalidate the enforcement of other portions of the award.  The list of matters that would be deemed to contravene public policy is not well-defined and individual judges may reach conflicting results in similar cases.  However, from our experience, enforcement judges tend to enforce an award unless it contravenes a fundamental principle of Sharia.

# Limitation

## Which law governs the limitation period for registering a foreign judgment or arbitration award?

Saudi law would govern the limitation period for enforcing a foreign judgment or arbitration award in Saudi Arabia.  There is no statute of limitations under Saudi law for the enforcement of a foreign judgment or arbitration award.

## If the limitation period for registering a foreign judgment is governed by the law of the place of enforcement, what is that limitation period in your jurisdiction?

There is no statute of limitations under Saudi law for the enforcement of a foreign judgment or arbitration award.  Generally speaking, Sharia (Islamic law) does not recognize that legal rights may terminate simply due to the passage of time.

## If the limitation period for registering a foreign arbitration award is governed by the law of the place of enforcement, what is that limitation period in your jurisdiction?

N/A

# Enforcement

## Are fees and costs of enforcement typically recoverable?

Generally, no.

## Is seizure of goods available as an enforcement method?

Yes.  Enforcement judges in Saudi have broad authority to seize assets to ensure compliance, including seizure of monetary and non-monetary assets.

## Is attachment of earnings available as an enforcement method?

Yes, but with certain limitations taking into consideration familial obligations.

## Is attachment of third party debts available as an enforcement method?

Yes.

## Are charging orders or orders for sale of land, goods etc available as an enforcement method?

Yes.

## Can a judgment or award be enforced by way of insolvency proceedings?

Yes, but recovery would depend on the availability of assets and the claims of other creditors.

## Can a receiver be appointed by way of enforcement?

Yes.

## Any other method of enforcement?

No.

# Contacts

## Who can be contacted to enforce a judgment or arbitration award in this jurisdiction?

Abdulrahman AlAjlan, Mikel Anton

## What papers will be needed?

A power of attorney; the original of the instrument to be enforced; and, in the case of companies, a copy of the claimant's commercial registration certificate and its bylaws.

# Rating

## Overall, is enforcement of foreign judgments in this jurisdiction easy, moderate or difficult?

Difficult, if the judgment was issued in a jurisdiction with which Saudi Arabia does not have an arrangement with Saudi Arabia for the mutual enforcement of judgments.  Moderate, if the jurisdiction has an arrangement with Saudi Arabia for the mutual enforcement of judgments.

## Overall, is enforcement of foreign arbitration awards in this jurisdiction easy, moderate or difficult?

Moderate, if the issuing jurisdiction is a signatory to the New York Convention or other treaties for the enforcement of arbitration awards.

# Reciprocal Enforcement Maps

## Reciprocal Enforcement Maps

Click the link below to access the reciprocal maps for Saudi Arabia.

[Reciprocal Enforcement Map](https://resourcehub.bakermckenzie.com/en/-/media/cross-border-enforcement-center/files/emea/saudiarabia.pdf?sc_lang=en)

©Copyright © 2025 Baker & McKenzie. All rights reserved. **Ownership**: This documentation and content (Content) is a proprietary resource owned exclusively by Baker McKenzie (meaning Baker & McKenzie International and its member firms). The Content is protected under international copyright conventions. Use of this Content does not of itself create a contractual relationship, nor any attorney/client relationship, between Baker McKenzie and any person. **Non-reliance and exclusion**: All Content is for informational purposes only and may not reflect the most current legal and regulatory developments. All summaries of the laws, regulations and practice are subject to change. The Content is not offered as legal or professional advice for any specific matter. It is not intended to be a substitute for reference to (and compliance with) the detailed provisions of applicable laws, rules, regulations or forms. Legal advice should always be sought before taking any action or refraining from taking any action based on any Content. Baker McKenzie and the editors and the contributing authors do not guarantee the accuracy of the Content and expressly disclaim any and all liability to any person in respect of the consequences of anything done or permitted to be done or omitted to be done wholly or partly in reliance upon the whole or any part of the Content. The Content may contain links to external websites and external websites may link to the Content. Baker McKenzie is not responsible for the content or operation of any such external sites and disclaims all liability, howsoever occurring, in respect of the content or operation of any such external websites. **Attorney Advertising**: This Content may qualify as “Attorney Advertising” requiring notice in some jurisdictions. To the extent that this Content may qualify as Attorney Advertising, PRIOR RESULTS DO NOT GUARANTEE A SIMILAR OUTCOME. **Reproduction**: Reproduction or copying of the Content on this Site without express written authorization is strictly prohibited.