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Iran

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How lawyers are ranked

Every year we carry out thousands of in-depth interviews with clients in order to assess the reputations and expertise of business lawyers worldwide. The qualities we look for (and which determine rankings) include technical legal ability, professional conduct, client service, commercial awareness/astuteness, diligence, commitment, and other qualities most valued by the client.

Contents:

General Business Law p.1583
 General Business Law Foreign Experts
 (Based Abroad) p.1584
 Leading Individuals p.1585

General Business Law

General Business Law
Leading Firms
Band 1
Atieh Associates Law Firm
T&S Associates
Band 2
International Law Office
Sabeti & Khatami
Torossian, Avnessian & Associates
Band 3
Atai & Associates
Dr. Ali Hatami & Associates
Sanglaj International Consultants
Senior Statespeople
Senior Statespeople: distinguished older partners
Akhlaghi Behrooz <i>International Law Office</i>
Leading Individuals
Band 1
Ehtesham Ahmad <i>T&S Associates</i>
Shafizadeh Cyrus <i>Atieh Associates Law Firm</i>
Band 2
Hatami Ali <i>Dr. Ali Hatami & Associates</i>
Kani Farid <i>Atieh Associates Law Firm</i>
Khatami Behnam <i>Sabeti & Khatami</i>
Sabeti Hooman <i>Sabeti & Khatami</i>
Torossian Vrej <i>Torossian, Avnessian & Associates</i>
Band 3
Atai Ali Akbar <i>Atai & Associates</i>
Gheidi Nasim <i>Law Office of Gheidi & Associates (ORL) ◇</i>
Hassanzadeh Elham <i>EH & Partners (ORL) ◇</i>
Mashkour Moshkan <i>Sanglaj International Consultants</i>
Mehrinfar Mahnaz <i>International Law Office</i>
Sadr Encyeh <i>Sadr Law & Consulting Office (SALCO) (ORL) ◇</i>
Shahabi Ali <i>Atieh Associates Law Firm</i>
Tavakoli M. Ebrahim <i>Atieh Associates Law Firm</i>
Up-and-coming individuals
Sotoodehnia Sahar <i>International Law Office</i>
◇ (ORL) = Other Ranked Lawyer.
<i>Alphabetical order within each band. Band 1 is highest.</i>

Band 1

Atieh Associates Law Firm

Atieh Associates is consistently noted as one of Iran's most prominent commercial law firms. It is capable of providing sophisticated advice to international clients, with noteworthy expertise concerning sanctions, foreign investment and corporate restructurings. The firm also has an impressive domestic client base and is highly experienced assisting with commercial contracts and corporate governance. Its accomplished disputes practice has a good track

record of success in both litigation and arbitration. Clients find the firm to be "very responsive, knowledgeable and solution-oriented."

Cyrus Shafizadeh is a highly distinguished practitioner whom sources cite as one of Iran's market-leading lawyers. He is a qualified solicitor in England and Wales and excels in advising international clients on matters such as corporate restructurings. He is also highly experienced acting for domestic companies on corporate transactions. **Farid Kani** is an increasingly prominent figure in the Iranian legal market, with notable experience advising clients from the oil and gas and healthcare sectors. He recently became dual-qualified after being admitted as a solicitor in England and Wales. One client enthused: "He has a solid understanding of our industry. He is smart, has great interpersonal skills and has gained our trust." **Ali Shahabi** is well respected for his prowess in corporate and commercial matters, most significantly his work acting for international clients on restructurings and sanction compliance issues. He is well versed in advising companies hailing from the construction, manufacturing, and food and beverage industries. **Ebrahim Tavakoli** has a prolific practice covering corporate and commercial matters as well as representing companies in litigation. His work of late has involved acting for clients in the pharmaceutical and telecoms sectors.

T&S Associates

T&S Associates is an "extremely good" full-service law firm with remarkable longevity in the Iranian market. It acts for a broad base of international clients and is equally capable of handling contentious and non-contentious matters. It is particularly acclaimed for its capabilities in the corporate governance space, with complementary strengths in regulatory and contractual issues as well as corporate restructuring. The firm is also experienced in litigation and arbitration. One client said: "The quality of service is excellent and their knowledge of international law is top-level."

Ahmad Ehtesham is a market-leading figure with extensive experience advising international clients on their operations in Iran. He is skilled in disputes work while also maintaining an acclaimed non-contentious practice covering corporate governance and regulatory matters. Sources highlight his "precise answers and advice" in addition to commenting that "he knows how to deal with people and has a comprehensive knowledge of regulations."

Band 2

International Law Office

International Law Office is a long-standing firm which provides a robust commercial law offering to a variety of cli-

ents. It is adept at acting for international entities on foreign investment, joint ventures and other contract negotiation mandates. The team is also well versed in representing clients in disputes, including criminal litigation. Clients hail from Europe, Asia and across the Middle East.

Behrooz Akhlaghi is a respected senior practitioner who has a well-established track record in both the contentious and non-contentious spheres. His recent work includes aiding with the review of commercial agreements as well as defending international clients in criminal litigation. **Mahnaz Mehrinfar** is an experienced figure who advises on a variety of commercial agreements and day-to-day operational issues. She is notable for her expertise relating to the aviation, mining and telecoms sectors, as well as her prominent role in the management of the firm. She has further experience in tax and labour disputes. **Sahar Sotoodehnia** has garnered a strong reputation through her handling of a wide variety of contentious and non-contentious matters. This includes assisting with commercial contracts such as joint ventures and distribution agreements as well as advising on international arbitration.

Sabeti & Khatami

Sabeti & Khatami is fast establishing itself as a go-to firm for both domestic and international clients. It has considerable experience in project finance and is well accustomed to acting for clients based in Europe and Asia. It is also accomplished at commercial dispute resolution, most significantly in litigation, and has an array of experience advising on corporate restructuring in response to sanctions. Interviewees note: "They have extensive experience of advising on a range of issues, including investment agreements, financings and project development. They are responsive, diligent and professional lawyers who understand the needs of their clients." One source added: "I have been very impressed with the deep expertise of the team."

Behnam Khatami advises numerous clients from the technology, oil and gas, and financial services sectors. Clients say: "He is intellectually strong, has hands-on experience and commercial awareness, and is very responsive." Other sources observe that "he's very calm and always balanced in his attitude" and that he possesses "an extensive knowledge of international trade issues." His practice covers a broad array of corporate structuring and transactional matters, with notable expertise in energy and infrastructure projects. **Hooman Sabeti** is a respected practitioner with considerable experience in cross-border finance and capital markets transactions. He advises a diverse client list, comprising domestic and international names, on issues as diverse as credit facility agreements and the restructuring of investment funds. One client called him "the best capital markets lawyer in Iran," while another praised his "unpar-

alleled expertise. He never ceases to surprise you with his problem solving and out-of-the-box thinking.”

Torossian, Avanesian & Associates

Torossian, Avanesian & Associates is a well-respected firm with a strong bench of seasoned, highly regarded practitioners. It continues to act for international clients on a variety of projects and commercial advisory mandates. It is also recognised for its experience in arbitration. Sources state that the team is “very reliable and they’re good lawyers,” with peers agreeing that “they’re a good outfit.”

Vrej Torossian is a widely applauded figure who is adept at the full gamut of corporate and commercial mandates, and has further strengths in arbitration. Market sources regard him as “a great practitioner” and “a good choice” for commercial advisory matters.

Band 3

Atai & Associates

Atai & Associates is a full-service firm whose corporate practice is well versed in group restructurings, joint ventures and company liquidations. However, the firm is best respected for its strengths in dispute resolution, with a range of experience acting for clients on both litigation and arbitration. It represents a number of notable names in sectors such as oil and gas, finance and technology.

Ali Akbar Atai is a well-regarded senior figure in the market. He is highly skilled in all aspects of corporate law and oversees work that ranges from assisting clients with financing arrangements to representing them in high-stakes commercial litigation. Interviewees respect his many years’ experience and regard him as “very good – a great guy.”

Dr. Ali Hatami & Associates

Dr. Ali Hatami & Associates has a broad client roster and a vast range of expertise. It is most frequently acclaimed for its understanding of the issues at play in oil and gas transactions, with further notable skills in construction projects and corporate taxation as well as company formations and liquidations. The firm’s contentious work covers franchising and intellectual property disputes. Clients summarise that its main strengths include the “good availability” of the team and the “efficient solutions” it is able to offer.

Ali Hatami is highly regarded for his prolific oil and gas and construction practice. In such matters he is capable of acting for both domestic and international entities. Clients regularly emphasise his depth of experience, with one noting: “He is an excellent lawyer and has always solved our problems.” Another source highlighted “his excellent knowledge of contractual matters.”

Sanglaj International Consultants

Sanglaj International Consultants is frequently identified by sources for its strengths in acting for government entities

as well as for its capabilities in international arbitration. On these matters, the team enjoys close ties to major international law firms. A source declared Sanglaj to have “a good reputation,” adding that “they’re high-quality lawyers.”

Moshkan Mashkour is strongly endorsed by sources for his international arbitration practice, alongside his experience acting for government entities. Market commentators depict him as “a well-known figure who is very well respected.”

Other Ranked Lawyers

Nasim Gheidi is the managing partner of Gheidi & Associates. She is well recognised for her broad-ranging practice, which most significantly concerns matters of international trade and sanctions compliance. She has advised a number of high-profile international clients in this field.

Elham Hassanzadeh is the founder and lead partner of EH & Partners. She is a well-established figure in the energy sector with notable expertise in oil and gas matters.

Encyeh Sadr is the founder of Sadr Law & Consulting Office (SALCO). She demonstrates sound expertise advising on joint ventures, licensing and other commercial contracts, as well as assisting with trade mark enforcement. She has a strong track record when it comes to advising international clients on corporate governance issues.

General Business Law Foreign Experts (Based Abroad)

Foreign Desks (Based Abroad)
General Business Law
Iranian expertise based in countries listed below
Austria Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP *
France Dentons
France Eversheds Sutherland *
Germany CMS *
UK Herbert Smith Freehills
UK Stephenson Harwood LLP *

Foreign Experts (Based Abroad)
General Business Law
Iranian expertise based in countries listed below
Austria Sigari-Majd Farid Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP *
France Parvine Pirouzan Dentons
United Arab Emirates Mahmoudpour Atousa Eversheds
<small>* Indicates firm / individual with profile.</small>

Foreign Desks (Based Abroad)

CMS

See profile on p.2857

CMS operated a Tehran office for three years prior to its closure in 2019, and the firm continues to capitalise on the experiences gained during its time operating on the ground. Its Iran foreign desk is now primarily based out of Düsseldorf, but continues to be identified by sources for its strengths in international development projects with Iranian elements. Shaghayegh Smousavi is a key contact for the firm’s Iran desk.

Dentons

Dentons maintains a robust Iranian desk operating primarily out of Paris. It is experienced in a vast range of matters, including group restructurings and dissolutions, and is also highlighted by interviewees for its assured advice in regard

to sanctions. The team offers further abilities in dispute resolution, acting on Iranian court litigation as well as international arbitrations. The firm maintains an association with Tehran-based APP Legal Institute and regularly calls upon the resources of APP’s lawyers in its work for clients.

Pirouzan Parvine leads Dentons’ Iranian practice and is based in Paris. Market sources praise his capabilities, observing that “Pirouzan is a nice guy and helpful when it comes to sanctions advice.” He is experienced assisting clients with the restructuring and winding-up of their operations in Iran and is also well versed in tax disputes.

Eversheds Sutherland

See profile on p.3158

The Iranian desk of Eversheds Sutherland is best recognised for its expertise in disputes. Examples of its work in this field include high-value international arbitrations arising in the oil and gas sector. The desk’s other areas of expertise include advising on sanctions compliance and representing clients in regard to potential infringements of intellectual property within Iran. Non-contentious work includes assisting with distribution agreements. The team is equally strong advising Iranian entities and international corporations.

Atousa Mahmoudpour is based in Dubai. Her Iran-related work encompasses intellectual property and contractual disputes in addition to sanctions advice and group restructurings. On these matters she is particularly experienced in advising multinational entities.

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP

See profile on p.3161

Freshfields fields a notable Iranian desk, principally comprising experts based in Vienna and Hamburg. The firm regularly assists multinationals with sanctions compliance issues and the related reorganisation of their Iranian operations. It is well regarded by sources within Iran and offers a robust practice possessing in-depth expertise across a

wide range of sectors, including telecoms, automotive, and oil and gas. Interviewees say: “They do a lot of good work.”

Farid Sigari-Majd (see p.475) is based in Vienna and is the leader of Freshfields’ Iran desk. He has wide-ranging experience advising on cross-border M&A, restructurings and a variety of regulatory matters, and is known for his particular strength advising clients from the aviation and financial services sectors.

Herbert Smith Freehills

Herbert Smith Freehills has considerable experience assisting with Iranian matters. Its London office is a focal point for this expertise, although partners based in Tokyo and Hong Kong are also well versed in Iran-related issues. The firm has advised European and Asian clients on both transactional work and an array of matters related to sanctions, with the energy sector a particular forte. Sources say: “They’re very good.” William Breeze and Reza Dadbakhsh, both based in London, are key contacts for the firm’s Iranian foreign desk.

Stephenson Harwood LLP

See profile on p.3168

Stephenson Harwood is noted for having represented several notable Iranian clients in regard to disputes arising out of trade sanctions. In this arena, particular highlights include representing key players in Iran’s financial services sector. The Iran group is also noteworthy for its experience acting on arbitrations against European governments. Further areas of experience include advising commercial clients on their exit from the Iranian market. Key contacts for Iranian issues are partner Sue Millar and of counsel Stephen Ashley, both of whom are based in London.

Leaders' Profiles in Iran

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Featured in General Business Law (Iran), Corporate/M&A (Austria)

See under Austria for profile.