



The Offices, 02 Building
One Central
Dubai World Trade Centre
PO Box 9204
Dubai - United Arab Emirates

30 July 2026

To all the Members of the AIPPI - UAE National Group

14th Circular / 2026

Reflecting on trade mark enforcement challenges in the UAE and in the GCC

We are pleased to share our 14th circular prepared by Munir Suboh, which reflects some of the trade mark enforcement challenges encountered across the UAE and GCC. While the region shares many common legal principles, enforcement continues to differ in practice from one jurisdiction to another. In this circular, we explore some of these practical differences and considerations, with the aim of providing a useful regional perspective.

Challenges (online and offline)

It is noticed that one of the core challenges in the GCC region is the practical realities of enforcement, namely offline. A single regional strategy is rarely effective, as each country has its own legal framework with different enforcement mechanisms and constraints. Understanding these differences, and setting realistic expectations, is essential to delivering actionable advice aligned with enforcement goals. Investigations also require careful handling to ensure compliance with the local laws and policies. In addition, effective enforcement often depends on the timely preservation of evidence, particularly in online matters where infringing content may be removed or altered quickly. Proper documentation of infringement before initiating enforcement action is therefore essential.

The UAE stands out as one of the most advanced jurisdictions for trade mark enforcement, offering multiple tools, including police, customs, administrative bodies, and civil courts. However, even within the UAE, enforcement pathway can vary by emirate and jurisdiction, making tailored strategies essential. In essence, most challenges can be managed through up-to-date strategic guidance from trusted trade mark counsel who can coordinate the enforcement effectively. The neighbouring countries enforcement systems are also evolving to offer promising tools to the brand owners, such as the commercial courts in KSA that specializes in IP disputes, and the Ministerial IP departments at the Qatari Ministry of Commerce and Industry, are also worth to note and focus on their roles to embrace the IP enforcement system in the region.

Building on that, a significant part of IP enforcement work nowadays involves digital infringement, such as misuse of marketplaces, social media accounts, domain names or websites, etc. It is noticed that the digital landscape has reshaped the threat environment, placing pressure on enforcement. GCC legislators, including the UAE, have introduced laws targeting online infringements. In response, brand owners need to continue expanding trade mark portfolios and adopting stronger digital enforcement tools. AI now plays a core role in monitoring, detection, and response. At the same time, AI-generated content presents new challenges, including the unauthorized use of trade marks in synthetic advertising, counterfeit product listings, deepfakes, and deceptive online content, requiring brand owners to continually adapt their enforcement strategies. Ongoing engagement with all stakeholders, including online platforms, such as social media networks, marketplaces, and domain registries, is essential to ensuring effective enforcement.

Trade mark emerging issues and Trade mark litigation

Experience in litigation would strengthens advice by enabling a pragmatic assessment of risks, outcomes, and remedies to brand owners. Brand owners need to understand the outcome of litigations to make informed commercial decisions, avoid unnecessary escalations, and resolve deadlocks during negotiations when this is offered. Conversely, understanding transactional structures, such as licensing, supports contentious work by allowing clearer explanations of commercial intent and industry practice to courts and the enforcement authorities.

Trade mark squatting and other forms of unauthorised use are growing concerns in the enforcement domain at the GCC. Gaps in trade mark registration coverage and developing legal frameworks make enforcement challenging in many cases. These challenges further highlight the importance of maintaining comprehensive trade mark portfolios and adopting proactive filing strategies across key jurisdictions before disputes arise.

Key Promising Sectors to embrace enforcement advocacy:

Media, sports, particularly football, and digital assets continue to attract significant public interest as markets regain momentum. As the intellectual property ecosystem matures, robust and effective enforcement mechanisms are likely to emerge, creating greater opportunities for structured IP protection, commercialization, and licensing across these sectors. The region has already witnessed substantial investment in these industries, supported by strong engagement from both traditional and digital media platforms. Major global events, such as the FIFA World Cup ones (past and the future), together with significant investments by regional entities in acquiring ownership stakes in international football clubs, have elevated the sports industry to an entirely new level across the region. As a result, sports and media, alongside established sectors such as fashion and luxury brands, should remain key industries in advocating for stronger and advanced IP enforcement frameworks throughout the GCC and beyond. Strengthening enforcement in these high-profile sectors can serve as a catalyst for broader IP protection, fostering innovation, investment, and sustainable economic growth.

Thank you.

Prepared by: Munir Suboh

Verified by: Nevin Koshy