

Establishment of New Intellectual Property rights protection department in Sharjah, UAE

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As of February 2011, Sharjah Department of Economic Development (“SDED”) has established a new Intellectual Property Rights Protection Department (“IPRD”) in a show of commitment to the enforcement of IP rights in Sharjah in a more organised and streamlined manner.

Sharjah is one of the seven emirates forming the federation of the United Arab Emirates and its Department of Economic Development is the governmental authority charged with powers of enforcement of IP rights.

Previously, complainants seeking to file complaints against IP infringements had to pursue their complaints through the Complaints and Dispute section, a part of the Legal Affairs department of the SDED, and raids would be conducted through them. The creation of the IPRD means that complainants can now route their complaints directly to the IPRD, which acts as a one stop shop for conducting raid action against infringers in the emirate of Sharjah.

This important development is a boon to trademark proprietors in the combat against counterfeits as it demonstrates a consolidated and focused approach taken by the UAE government at the emirate level to win the war against IP infringements. With the IPRD entrenched as part of the government’s artillery in IP enforcement, it is expected that it will provide a platform for the launch of public awareness programs on IP rights and its enforcement as well for facilitating engagement with other public authorities such as the Police as well as the private sector.