

# A moment with Mohamed Khodeir

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Rapid development, marked by busy deal momentum is something Mohamed is more than comfortable with, having spent the previous six years in the firm's Dubai office advising IPO clients.

Mohamed's original path to law was accidental. Leaving school, he sought a profession which relied as little as possible on maths or science excellence, something he feels he lacks. With his love of logic, a degree in law was decided upon as a path to what looked like his perfect career – diplomacy. But it was the study of that subject that came to intrigue him more and more, until diplomacy became merely all that bought him to his true vocation in life.

His love for corporate law was decided at university, where he declined a public prosecution role at graduation, to chase the thrill of the deal. After studying in Europe and having been called to the Bar in Egypt, law took Mohamed to the UAE just as activity in the Gulf's equity listing space started to bubble.

Mohamed is adamant that joining Al Tamimi's fast-growing and cosmopolitan, corporate team in 2006 was one of the best decisions he has made. "Al Tamimi was one of the first Arab law firms to offer specialist practices, which demonstrates the vision leading the business. My time in the firm's corporate law practice, before refining my IPO expertise, exposed me to everything from employment to litigation work, which my transaction advisory has actually benefited greatly from."

Since joining Al Tamimi, he has seen, and in many cases led, more corporate deal action than he could ever have imagined as a student in Egypt, ahead of Dubai's naughtie's boom. Mohamed is best known for his work designing and supervising the implementation of a major cross border corporate restructuring project of a GCC conglomerate worth over US \$500m. He has advised an oil services company in respect to a major settlement agreement worth over US \$200m; advised on IPO deals, with offering value worth over US \$300; led numerous M&A deals worth over US \$200m; and designed and implemented miscellaneous governance structures and acted as counsel for major family businesses restructuring. Not to mention his high profile thought leadership on topics such as corporate governance in the GCC.

Had it not been for the financial down-turn in 2009 – and a chance for Mohamed to exhale, he may have never got around to his greatest achievement yet... "I owe my family to Lehman's collapse!" he jokes. Amidst softening deal flow, Mohamed married his wife and had two daughters, Sakhatija (3 years) and Hajar (18 months). It was perhaps this change and the challenge of channelling his growth market and unrivalled GCC IPO experience that took him to Doha, which he says he enjoys very much and is "a great city – especially for young families".

The move to Doha meant once again getting his head around a new set of laws (which is not entirely different to the UAE's he reports) and new regulatory structures. Importantly for Al Tamimi, which prides itself on a sincerely local approach in each market, it meant getting underneath the nuances of Qatar's business culture and the new client needs. Also, as a Senior Partner in the office, Mohamed needs to always spend time understanding the DNA of the diverse team and their evolving ways and needs.

Mohamed's advice to younger lawyers, starting out is firstly to believe and enjoy what you do and to focus seriously on your objectives. He stresses his reliance on spiritual clarity and having "God as [his] attorney" throughout his career. Finally, he stresses how important finding the right corporate culture fit is, especially for lawyers. "I was lucky to find a firm with the same vision and values as me early on. Al Tamimi and I have developed and grown alongside each other."

Are there any burning ambitions left for the accomplished lawyer and father? A keen political news follower and proud Egyptian national, Mohamed would like to one day return to and serve his home country.

He works continuously to find better work, family balance, which he feels has been supported by Al Tamimi “Our employees work hard and meet their deadlines, but we want a happy, healthy staff that will stay here for a long time. No credit is given for weekends spent at the office and taking leave is essential” he says.

When time does become more available for Mohamed, the lover of classical, jazz and Arabic music, says he may even take up the keyboard again.