

PILLSBURY ANNOUNCES INTENT TO OPEN IN RIYADH PARTNERING WITH ALARFAJ & PARTNERS: PILLSBURY ALARFAJ

December 17, 2024



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Pillsbury has announced its intention to launch an office in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, following its recent filing of required paperwork with the Saudi Ministry of Justice. While the license is still pending, Pillsbury intends to partner with local firm AlArfaj & Partners to establish its on-the-ground presence upon approval.

After approval, the firm will be operating in Saudi Arabia under the name of Pillsbury AlArfaj. AlArfaj & Partners' managing partner Khalid AlArfaj, a Pillsbury alum with broad expertise and an established reputation when it comes to Saudi corporate matters and energy projects, is expected to join the firm as partner at that time.

"Pillsbury has been involved in a wide range of work in the Kingdom over several decades, and the demands for in-country legal support are growing," said Firm Chair David Dekker. "We're hearing this from clients in all the U.S., European and Asian financial and technology centers in which we operate, and from within Saudi Arabia itself. Against that backdrop, the time is right to expand our commitment to the Saudi Arabia market and the wider Middle East region."

“Through my experience working with Pillsbury in the United States, and our continued cooperation since I returned to Saudi Arabia,” added AlArfaj, “I have developed a deep appreciation for Pillsbury’s longstanding relationship with the Kingdom. In recent decades, the firm has been an important partner in the country’s development. Together, we can achieve great success for our clients and for the Kingdom as a whole.”

AlArfaj has extensive experience practicing law in Saudi Arabia and the United States. His broad practice spans M&A, joint ventures, corporate structuring, restructuring and governance. He frequently supports IPOs, rights offerings in Saudi Arabia’s capital markets, and advises on private equity and venture capital transactions.

As the first lawyer on the Atomic Energy Team at King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, contributing to reviewing the Saudi Nuclear Law draft as well as Saudi Arabia’s international nuclear agreements, and through his tenure with Pillsbury’s energy team in the United States, AlArfaj is highly regarded for his experience in energy. He advises international energy companies on projects and ensures compliance with regulatory requirements in Saudi Arabia.

Prior to founding AlArfaj & Partners, AlArfaj worked at several international law firms in the United States and Saudi Arabia, including Pillsbury. He is fluent in both Arabic and English, and is admitted to practice law in Saudi Arabia, New York and Washington D.C.

Pillsbury has a long history of notable work in and relating to Saudi Arabia, with the firm’s diversity of strong practices well-aligned with growing international interest and investment in the Kingdom. This has included engagements relating to groundbreaking energy, petrochemical and other infrastructure projects; major transactions for leading aviation, food & beverage, and hospitality brands; multinational tech start-up investments; and complex cross-border disputes.

Recent notable Pillsbury engagements relating to Saudi Arabia include:

- Advising the Ministry of Energy and the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy on the development of a civil nuclear power program in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

- Advising Saudi investors, including HRH Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed bin Talal Al Saud, a well-known entrepreneur and investor, on investments both in Saudi Arabia and various other geographies.
- Represented Snap Inc. in connection with the opening of corporate offices in Saudi Arabia, and on corporate and public policy and marketing deals in the Kingdom.
- Represented joint lead managers, including Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, on Saudi-based aircraft leasing company AviLease's USD 2.5 billion aviation financing. The matter will be recognized as Transport Finance Deal of the Year at the 2025 Global Banking & Markets Saudi Arabia Awards.
- Represented the Saudi Bid committee, as a sub-contractor, on matters involving its 2034 FIFA World Cup Bid submission.

The firm's standout reputation and long track record of innovation within the Energy, Technology, Financial, Real Estate & Construction and Life Sciences industries should be especially valuable to entities operating in the Kingdom given the priorities set forth in the country's Vision 2030. Of particular relevance, the firm was recently recognized as the Energy Transition Law Firm of the Year in North America by the Financial Times for a second consecutive year.

Pillsbury's broader Middle East practice consists of more than 40 practitioners across the globe who are actively working alongside clients in the region, on in-country, inbound and outbound matters. Pillsbury counsels clients based and operating in the Middle East on large scale energy and infrastructure projects; commercial transactions, including corporate formations, venture investments, public offerings, private placements, cross-border M&A transactions and sophisticated joint venture agreements; compliance programs and regulatory obligations; and complex disputes and arbitration.

Nadia Barazi, a London-based Pillsbury partner who leads the firmwide Middle East practice, said: “A Riyadh presence benefits all our clients with business interests in the region, whether they are based in the Kingdom or elsewhere. As Saudi Arabia’s economy continues its rapid ascent—with particular attention on the Energy, Technology, Financial, Real Estate & Construction and Life Sciences sectors—the opportunities available to companies and investors there are multiplying just as quickly. Pillsbury has a leading reputation in those industries and more.”

ABOUT PILLSBURY

Pillsbury is one of the world’s foremost law firms, advising technology companies and their investors, as well as clients in the energy and natural resources, financial, life sciences and digital health, real estate and construction, and other dynamic industries. From microchips to blue chips, Pillsbury advises clients ranging from entrepreneurs and startups working out of a garage to the largest public and private companies. The firm and its lawyers are known for their collaboration across disciplines, authoritative commercial awareness, and market leading practices that are consistently recognized by Chambers & Partners, Financial Times and other publications.