

QATAR: DEVELOPMENTS IN ELECTRONIC EXECUTION AND JUDICIAL PROCEDURES

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Qatar Litigation and Dispute Resolution Alert

By: Randa I. Shiblaq, Matthew R. M. Walker

Following the issuance of Law No. 16 of 2010 regulating electronic commerce and transactions (the Electronic Transactions Law), Qatar has continued to advance its regulatory and operational framework governing electronic transactions and signatures. In recognition of the importance of the Electronic Transactions Law, several developments have been implemented by competent authorities and legal bodies, most notably the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

The MoJ is mandated to perform key functions in relation to document execution and authentication, including (i) verification of the identity of relevant parties and signatories, and (ii) authentication of signatures on legal documents. Historically, the MoJ required three key requirements to be satisfied for document attestation, namely that any authorized signatory requiring authentication must include the following:

- Possess the requisite legal capacity to execute the relevant documents.
- Hold valid legal identification (such as a passport or Qatari ID).
- Have the necessary authority to represent the relevant legal entity and execute the documents in question.

In this context, legal capacity and authority address different issues. Legal capacity concerns whether the individual signatory is legally capable of entering into and executing the relevant document in their own right, which would typically be established by producing valid identification and, where relevant, evidence that there is no legal restriction on that individual's ability to sign.

By contrast, authority concerns whether that individual has been duly empowered to bind the relevant legal entity. Necessary authority would typically be established by producing documents that demonstrate the chain of authority from the legal entity to the individual signatory. Depending on the nature of the entity and the transaction, this may include the company's corporate constitutional documents, commercial registration extract records, board or shareholder resolutions approving the transaction or appointment, powers of attorney or other corporate approvals confirming that the signatory is authorized to execute the relevant document on behalf of the entity, and documents evidencing the chain of authorization.

Under the traditional framework, the MoJ required signatories to (i) attend in person before a notary public, (ii) present their identification documents, and (iii) execute the documents in the presence of the notary. Upon review of the documents, the signatory's identity, and evidence of authority, the notary would proceed with attestation, provided that all requirements were satisfied. This process served several important legal purposes, including the following:

- Establishing and confirming the date of execution, thereby giving the document legal effect.
- Rendering documents admissible before governmental authorities and courts.
- Enabling the completion of transactions requiring attested documentation (such as registration of security, transfer of assets, or assignment of rights).

Based on our recent experience in several applications before the MoJ, we understand that the MoJ has introduced a new system enabling the electronic execution of documents. This development reflects the practical implementation of the Electronic Transactions Law, particularly with respect to electronic signatures (E-Signatures). Recognizing that certain signatories may not be residents of Qatar and may not hold a Qatari ID or National Authentication System access, the MoJ has introduced an alternative process involving the following:

- The issuance of secure electronic links.
- Virtual meetings with a notary public for identity verification and signature authentication. It is worth noting that this option is tested only to process powers of attorneys, and steps are being taken to apply to other forms of documentation and transactions.

This mechanism facilitates remote execution while maintaining verification standards.

ALIGNMENT WITH JUDICIAL DEVELOPMENTS

In April 2026, the Supreme Judicial Council of Qatar issued Decision No. 9 of 2026 on electronic judicial procedures (the Digital Hearing Regulations). These Digital Hearing Regulations recognize the enforceability of electronic signatures, while at the same time confirming the validity of virtual verification of parties across all stages of judicial proceedings. This reflects a broader shift towards enabling electronic submission of memoranda, pleadings, and expert reports—and, perhaps more innovatively, enabling parties' participation in court hearings without the need for physical attendance.

These developments demonstrate Qatar's continued efforts to enhance efficiency in legal and governmental processes and to facilitate cross-border transactions and participation by promoting the use of secure digital infrastructure for document execution and dispute resolution. Despite these innovations, we consider the following points to be noteworthy:

- The Digital Hearing Regulations grant the courts authority to determine whether hearings will be conducted in person or virtually, depending on the circumstances of each case and the decisions of the competent judicial authority.
- The MoJ and other competent authorities retain broad discretionary powers.
- Additional requirements or supporting evidence of authority may still be requested on a case-by-case basis.

As the use of technology continues to reshape judicial processes, understanding the practical implications of these developments is increasingly important.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss how the new framework may affect your organization, please contact the authors listed above.

KEY CONTACTS



RANDA I. SHIBLAQ
SENIOR PARALEGAL

DOHA
+974.4.424.6138
RANDA.SHIBLAQ@KLGATES.COM



MATTHEW R. M. WALKER
PARTNER

LONDON, DOHA
+44.20.7360.8225
MATTHEW.WALKER@KLGATES.COM

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