

**Middle East Intellectual Property Newsletter Vol. 98**

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**1. Important topics**

**Saudi Arabia Seizes Over 35,000 Counterfeit Smartphones and Accessories in Riyadh<sup>1</sup>**

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Commerce, in coordination with local police authorities, has seized more than 35,000 counterfeit smartphones and accessories at a facility in Riyadh. The raid uncovered fake mobile devices, charging cables, earphones, and branded labels used to misrepresent the country of origin.

The facility was shut down, and those involved were referred to the relevant authorities. The case has also been submitted to the Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property (SAIP) for further action.

Under the Anti-Commercial Fraud Law, offenders may face up to three years of imprisonment, fines reaching SAR 1 million (approx. USD 267,000), deportation of foreign workers, and public disclosure of verdicts upon conviction.

This operation is part of broader national efforts to combat commercial fraud and protect intellectual property rights. In Q1 2025 alone, the Ministry of Commerce carried out more than 132,000 inspection visits across Saudi Arabia, including over 126,000 focused on commercial fraud and 6,500 targeting cover-up practices.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://saudigazette.com.sa/article/652129/SAUDI-ARABIA/Over-35000-counterfeit-smartphones-and-accessories-seized-in-Riyadh>

## **Saudi Arabia: Prosecution Launched in Counterfeit Pharmaceutical Case<sup>2</sup>**

The Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) has referred a commercial representative in Riyadh to the Public Prosecution for selling counterfeit pharmaceutical products. The case marks a serious violation of the Pharmaceutical and Herbal Establishments and Products Law, which carries penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment and fines of up to SAR 10 million (approx. USD 2.6 million).

The SFDA emphasized that counterfeit pharmaceuticals pose a significant risk to public health and safety, warranting strict legal action. The Authority urged the public to report violations through its hotline (19999) to support regulatory enforcement and protect consumers.

This case highlights Saudi Arabia's firm stance on IP and health-related violations and reinforces ongoing efforts to ensure the integrity of products circulating in the Kingdom's market.

## **UAE: Launches Geographical Indications System to Protect and Promote National Products<sup>3</sup>**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ministry of Economy has introduced a new federal system for registering Geographical Indications (GIs) aimed at protecting local products tied to specific regions and traditional knowledge. This marks a significant step in the country's strategy to enhance its intellectual property (IP) framework and promote Emirati products in international markets.

The system allows for the registration of products that derive distinct qualities or reputations from their geographic origin, such as Hatta honey, Ras Al Khaimah ceramics, Dabbas dates from Al Dhafra, and traditional palm frond handicrafts. These items will now benefit from GI protection under the UAE's Trademarks Law, which includes dedicated provisions to prevent misuse, imitation, or misrepresentation of origin.

GI applications are expected to be submitted online once the service is launched, with up to 30 products anticipated to be registered by the end of 2025. This initiative not only strengthens local industries and safeguards cultural heritage but also contributes to broader goals of economic diversification and sustainability. It is aligned with the UAE's "We the UAE 2031" vision and supports multiple UN Sustainable Development Goals, including those related to innovation and inclusive growth.

For right holders and investors, the new GI system opens up opportunities for brand differentiation, export expansion, and legal certainty in the UAE market.

## **UAE: Customs Strengthens IP Enforcement with Major Seizures in Early 2025<sup>4</sup>**

Dubai Customs seized counterfeit goods worth over AED 42 million (approx. USD 11.4 million) in the first quarter of 2025 as part of its ongoing crackdown on intellectual property (IP) violations. The seized items included counterfeit watches, electronics, eyewear, clothing, and other consumer goods.

The enforcement efforts reflect the UAE's continued prioritization of IP protection, aligned with Federal Decree Law No. 36 of 2021 on Trademarks. The law imposes severe penalties—including fines ranging from AED 100,000 to AED 1 million (approx. USD 27,000-272,000), imprisonment, and deportation—for the possession, sale, or distribution of counterfeit goods.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2600021/saudi-arabia>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.moec.gov.ae/en/-/ministry-of-economy-introduces-geographical-indications-for-national-products-enhancing-their-competitiveness-in-global-markets?p1back\\_url=%2Fen%2Ftest1%3Ftag%3D2021%26category%3D752020%26start%3D36](https://www.moec.gov.ae/en/-/ministry-of-economy-introduces-geographical-indications-for-national-products-enhancing-their-competitiveness-in-global-markets?p1back_url=%2Fen%2Ftest1%3Ftag%3D2021%26category%3D752020%26start%3D36)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae/dubai-customs-seizures-fake-goods-q1-2025?refresh=true>

Beyond enforcement, Dubai Customs has also expanded preventive measures, including IP awareness campaigns and inspector training programs in collaboration with law firms. In Q1 alone, 31 inspectors received specialized training to detect counterfeit products and support legal compliance.

In 2024, Dubai Customs reported 285 IP-related seizures, 159 trademark registrations, and 63 commercial agency registrations. These figures illustrate the country's broader commitment to fostering a secure trade environment and upholding brand owners' rights.

#### **Iran: Persian Added as Official Language for PCT Filings through Iran's Receiving Office<sup>5</sup>**

As of May 15, 2025, the Persian language has been officially added to the list of accepted languages for filing international patent applications under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), when selecting the Islamic Republic of Iran as the Receiving Office. This development follows successful consultations between Iran's Intellectual Property Center and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Previously, Persian-speaking applicants were required to submit international applications in English. The new provision now allows them to file documentation in Persian, reducing linguistic barriers and facilitating broader participation in the international patent system by Iranian and Persian-speaking innovators.

#### **Iran: Introducing New IP Law with Broader Coverage and Increased Fees<sup>6</sup>**

Iran has enacted a new Law on the Protection of Industrial Property, replacing its 2008 legislation. The updated law expands legal coverage to include utility models, certification marks, trade secrets, and unfair competition, aiming to bring Iran's IP framework closer to international standards.

Although procedural changes are still pending the issuance of executive regulations, the most immediate change is a significant increase in official fees, effective as of October 22, 2024:

- Trademark application fees for legal entities increased from approx. IRR 400,000 to 10 million (around USD 1/JPY 155 to USD 23/JPY 3,565)
- Registration fees rose from approx. IRR 2.4 million to 30 million (around USD 5.50/JPY 853 to USD 69/JPY 10,695)
- Appeal fees for one class went from approx. IRR 750,000 to 25 million (around USD 1.70/JPY 264 to USD 57/JPY 8,835)

Another major shift is the move to online payments in local currency. All applicants, including foreign entities, must now pay fees in Iranian rials through designated electronic systems. While nominal costs have increased, the depreciation of the rial may result in lower effective costs for international applicants, depending on exchange rates.

Additional procedural updates are expected. Companies with IP interests in Iran are encouraged to stay informed and adjust their filing and payment practices accordingly.

<sup>5</sup>

<https://www.mizanonline.ir/fa/news/4836129/%D8%B2%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%B2%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86%E2%80%8C%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%AB%D8%A8%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%B8%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%87-%D8%A8%DB%8C%D9%86%E2%80%8C%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A2%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%AF-pct-%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%87-%D8%B4%D8%AF>

<sup>6</sup> <https://cwbiip.com/insights/news/2025/irans-new-ip-law-expands-protection-amid-sharp-fee-increase>

## Iran: Joins the Vienna Classification System for Figurative Trademarks<sup>7</sup>

Iran has officially acceded to the Vienna Agreement Establishing an International Classification of the Figurative Elements of Marks, following legislative approval on April 27, 2025. This step brings Iran's trademark system further in line with international standards.

The Vienna Classification, developed in 1973 and amended in 1985, is a global system used to categorize trademarks that include figurative elements, such as logos, shapes, and symbols, based on their visual features. Going forward, Iran's Intellectual Property Office will apply the Vienna Classification in addition to the Nice Classification, which remains in use for goods and services.

This change will allow trademark applicants and examiners to search and classify marks based on graphic elements, improving efficiency in cross-border trademark management, and aligning Iran with the practices of other WIPO member states.

## 2. Additional topics

### Bahrain:

Industry Ministry Holds Ceremony Honoring Participants of Youth Intellectual Property Empowerment Project

<https://www.bna.bh/en/National/IndustryMinistryholdsceremonyhonouringparticipantsofyouthintellectualpropertyempowermentproject.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDtkqOS8r9ITwR9o2I3PndM%3D>  
(2025 - 05 - 18)

Industry Minister Receives WIPO Deputy Director General

<https://www.bna.bh/en/National/IndustryMinisterreceivesWIPODeputyDirectorGeneral.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDv6yhC9%2B3dvQNN3zbrowSs%3D> (2025 - 05 - 14)

Bahrain: Industry Ministry Undersecretary Honors IP Innovators

<https://www.bna.bh/en/news?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDq5dD0QqHB0XYjGo5NTTMcK%3D> (2025 - 05 - 06)

Bahrain Adopts the 12th Edition of the NICE Classification

<https://www.agip.com/News/en/news/22303> (2025 - 04 - 30)

### Bahrain & UAE:

Bahrain, UAE Announce Entry Into Force of Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement

<https://www.newsofbahrain.com/bahrain/112409.html> (2025 - 05 - 09)

### Iran:

WIPO-Iran Summer School Students Shine on the Global Stage in IP

[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ipc-iran-544926a7\\_wipo-iran-summer-school-students-shine-activity-7327204525616873472-0Q5V](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ipc-iran-544926a7_wipo-iran-summer-school-students-shine-activity-7327204525616873472-0Q5V) (2025 - 05 - 11)

Iran Signs Treaty on Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge

<https://ifpnews.com/iran-treaty-genetic-resources-traditional-knowledge/> (2025 - 05 - 17)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.legal500.com/developments/press-releases/iran-approved-the-law-on-accession-to-the-vienna-classification-for-figurative-elements-of-marks/>

**Iraq:**

World Intellectual Property Day: An Article According to Solid Sources and International Agreements With the Role of Artificial Intelligence and Reference to Iraq

<https://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=866480> (2025 - 04 - 27)

**Jordan:**

Rethinking Trademark Dilution in Jordan: Addressing Ambiguities and Aligning With Global Standards

<https://www.mdpi.com/2075-471X/14/3/36> (2025 - 05 - 25)

Jordan Reports 20 New Patents in Q1, Building on 2024's 111 Filings

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2598758/amp> (2025 - 04 - 28)

Scientific Conference of the Faculty of Law and Follow-Up Discussions of Research Papers

<https://www.aabu.edu.jo/EN/Pages/NewsDetails.aspx?ItemId=1578> (2025 - 05 - 08)

Closing the Gender Gap in IP: Women in Design

<https://www.wipo.int/en/web/gender/w/news/2025/closing-the-gender-gap-in-ip-women-in-design> (2025 - 05 - 14)

**Kuwait:**

KU, PAY Host Forum on Innovation and Intellectual Property

<https://kuwaittimes.com/article/27697/kuwait/other-news/ku-pay-host-forum-on-innovation-and-intellectual-property/> (2025 - 05 - 13)

**Lebanon:**

Economy Minister Launches Tender for Digitalization of Intellectual Property Services

<https://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/en/economy/777582/economy-minister-launches-tender-for-digitalization-of-intellectual-property-services> (2025 - 05 - 01)

**Oman:**

Omani Team Develops Strong, Biocompatible Dental Filling

<https://timesofoman.com/article/158490-omani-team-develops-strong-biocompatible-dental-filling> (2025 - 04 - 24)

Impact of R&D on ICV Development in Oman

<https://www.omanobserver.om/article/1169610/business/impact-of-rd-on-icv-development-in-oman> (2025 - 04 - 26)

**Pakistan:**

In Celebration of World Intellectual Property Day, Iqra University's ORIC Conducted an Insightful Session on IP Rights in Collaboration With IPO-Pakistan

[https://www.facebook.com/100067933574080/posts/1007245028216607/?\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/100067933574080/posts/1007245028216607/?_rdr) (2025 - 04 - 26)

Intellectual Property Law in the Age of Emerging Technologies

<https://www.ibanet.org/intellectual-property-law-emerging-technology> (2025 - 04 - 28)

Tapping IPR Benefits for Music Industry

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2542741/taping-ipr-benefits-for-music-industry> (2025 - 04 - 29)

In Celebration of World Intellectual Property Day, the IPR Subcommittee of OICCI Organized an Insightful IPR Awareness Session Focused on Advancing Pakistan's Intellectual Property Landscape

[https://www.instagram.com/oicciipk/p/DI3motgtuY/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/oicciipk/p/DI3motgtuY/?img_index=1) (2025 - 04 - 30)

Pakistan Will Never Be Shariah Compliant Without Anti-Piracy Enforcement

<https://propakistani.pk/2025/04/28/pakistan-will-never-be-shariah-compliant-without-anti-piracy-enforcement/> (2025 - 04 - 25)

**Qatar:**

Ministry of Commerce and Industry Marks World Intellectual Property Day With Focus on Heritage and Innovation

<https://businessarabia.qa/ministry-of-commerce-and-industry-marks-world-intellectual-property-day-with-focus-on-heritage-and-innovation/> (2025 - 04 - 26)

Second Qatar-UK Strategic Dialogue 2025 Joint Communiqué

<https://www.gulf-times.com/article/703858/qatar/second-qatar-uk-strategic-dialogue-2025-joint-communicue> (2025 - 04 - 29)

**Saudi Arabia:**

3.6 Million Infringing IP Materials Seized and 34,000 Websites Blocked in 2024

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/651762/SAUDI-ARABIA/36-million-infringing-intellectual-property-materials-seized-and-34000-websites-blocked-in-2024> (2025 - 05 - 06)

Patent Filings in Saudi Arabia Jump by 13%

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/651590/SAUDI-ARABIA/Patent-filings-in-Saudi-Arabia-jump-by-13> (2025 - 04 - 25)

SAIP Releases Intellectual Property Report 2024

<https://www.spa.gov.sa/en/N2312816> (2025 - 04 - 24)

Saudi Arabia to Launch SAR200 Million Investment Fund to Support Trademark Expansion Globally

<https://nordot.app/1292269208859935582> (2025 - 04 - 24)

Saudi Arabia Joins the Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs

<https://www.aippi.org/news/saudi-arabia-joins-the-hague-system/> (2025 - 04 - 25)

**Türkiye:**

Intellectual Property Licensing in Turkey: A Legal Guide for Foreign Businesses

<https://istanbullawyerfirm.com/blog/intellectual-property-licensing-turkey-legal-guide> (2025 - 04 - 21)

Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency Stops Responding to Information Requests Despite Landmark Decision Outlining Obligations and Trade Secret Definition

<https://www.iam-media.com/article/turkish-medicines-and-medical-devices-agency-stops-responding-information-requests-despite-landmark-decision-outlining-obligations-and-trade-secret-definition> (2025 - 04 - 23)

**UAE:**

UAE Celebrates Intellectual Property Day With AI Legislative Framework

<https://evrimagaci.org/tpg/uae-celebrates-intellectual-property-day-with-ai-legislative-framework-345518> (2025 - 04 - 25)

Dubai Culture and Ministry of Economy Forge Strategic Partnership to Strengthen Intellectual Property Ecosystem

<https://www.zawya.com/en/press-release/government-news/dubai-culture-and-ministry-of-economy-forge-strategic-partnership-to-strengthen-intellectual-property-ecosystem-ipmfoenf> (2025 - 04 - 25)

UAE Boosts Intellectual Property Protection to Drive Innovation, Economic Competitiveness: SLC Official

<https://www.arabianbusiness.com/culture-society/uae-boosts-intellectual-property-protection-to-drive-innovation-economic-competitiveness-slc-official> (2025 - 04 - 25)

UAE Highlights Innovative Use of Technology in Intellectual Property Protection at the International Trademark Association Meeting [https://menews247.com/uae-highlights-innovative-use-of-technology-in-intellectual-property-protection-at-the-international-trademark-association-meeting/#google\\_vignette](https://menews247.com/uae-highlights-innovative-use-of-technology-in-intellectual-property-protection-at-the-international-trademark-association-meeting/#google_vignette) (2025 - 05 - 04)

Strategic Insights Into Patenting in the United Arab Emirates  
<https://www.aippi.org/news/strategic-insights-into-patenting-in-the-united-arab-emirates/> (2025 - 04 - 25)

Make It in the Emirates: UAE Manufacturing Focused on Future With 'Sunrise Industries'  
<https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/economy/2025/05/18/uae-manufacturing/> (2025 - 04 - 29)

UAE University Registers 300+ Patents to Date in 2025, Promoting Culture of Innovation in UAE  
<https://www.mediaoffice.abudhabi/en/education/uae-university-registers-300-patents-to-date-in-2025-promoting-culture-of-innovation-in-uae/> (2025 - 05 - 02)

Why Intellectual Property Assets Should Be Held in a Separate Legal Entity  
<https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=42c85bf6-608e-4187-a30e-a2f5fa454d37> (2025 - 05 - 27)

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