



PATENT PROTECTION IN TURBULENT TIMES: MENA REGION

17 JUNE 2026



Leading IP specialists **Cedar White Bradley, PETOŠEVIĆ** and **Hahn & Hahn** merged in 2023 to form **CWB**, a multi-regional business that operates as one unified team, servicing and managing intellectual property portfolios of some of the world's leading IP owners across **Africa, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.**





● Our offices

We offer centrally managed super-regional IP solutions in secondary markets through an unrivalled footprint of strategically located offices.

1 Group / **4** Regions / **29** Offices / **100+** Jurisdictions / **170+** Practitioners / **300+** Employees

PROGRAMME AND SPEAKERS



PROGRAMME & INTRODUCTION

Slobodan Petošević



REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Rory Moore



MENA PATENTS: THE BASICS

Suzan Basheer



STRATEGIC FILING AND PROSECUTION OF PATENTS IN MENA COUNTRIES

Pieter Venter



TIMELINES, CHALLENGES AND CLIENT SUPPORT

Marianne Raphael





MENA PATENTS: THE BASICS

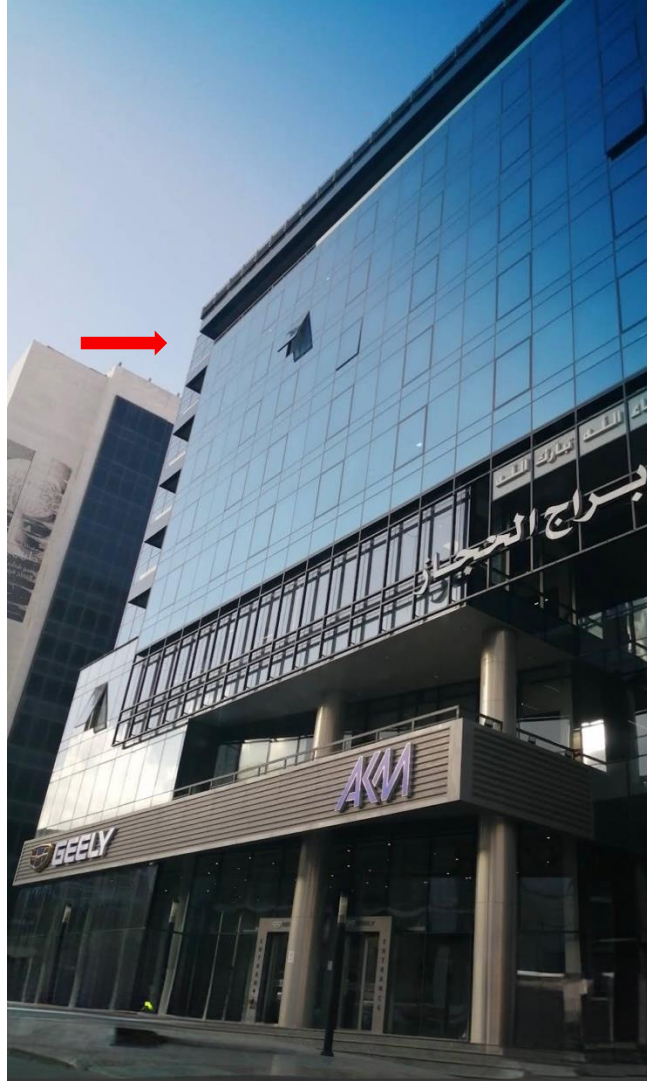
Suzan Basheer

Paralegal

Jordan

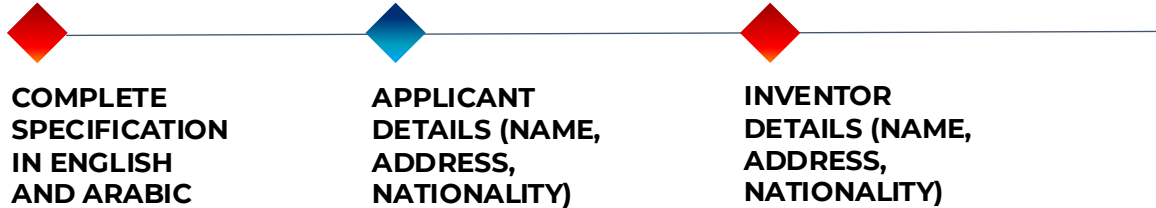
suzan.basheer@cwvip.com

CWB JORDAN OFFICE AND PATENT TEAM

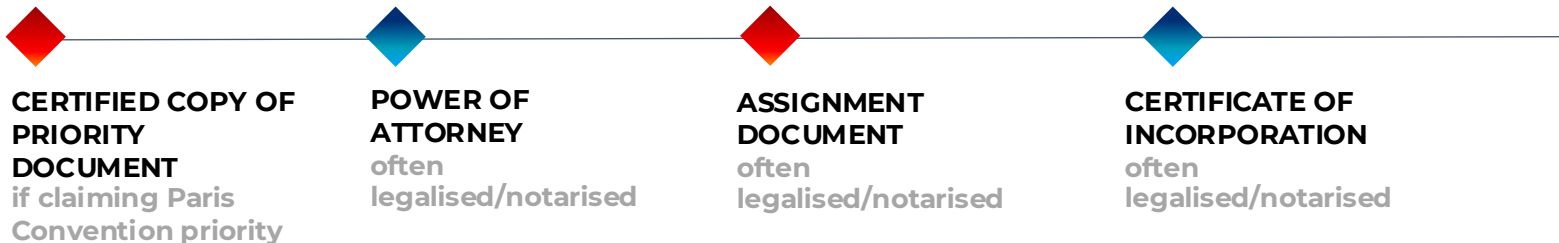


FILING REQUIREMENTS

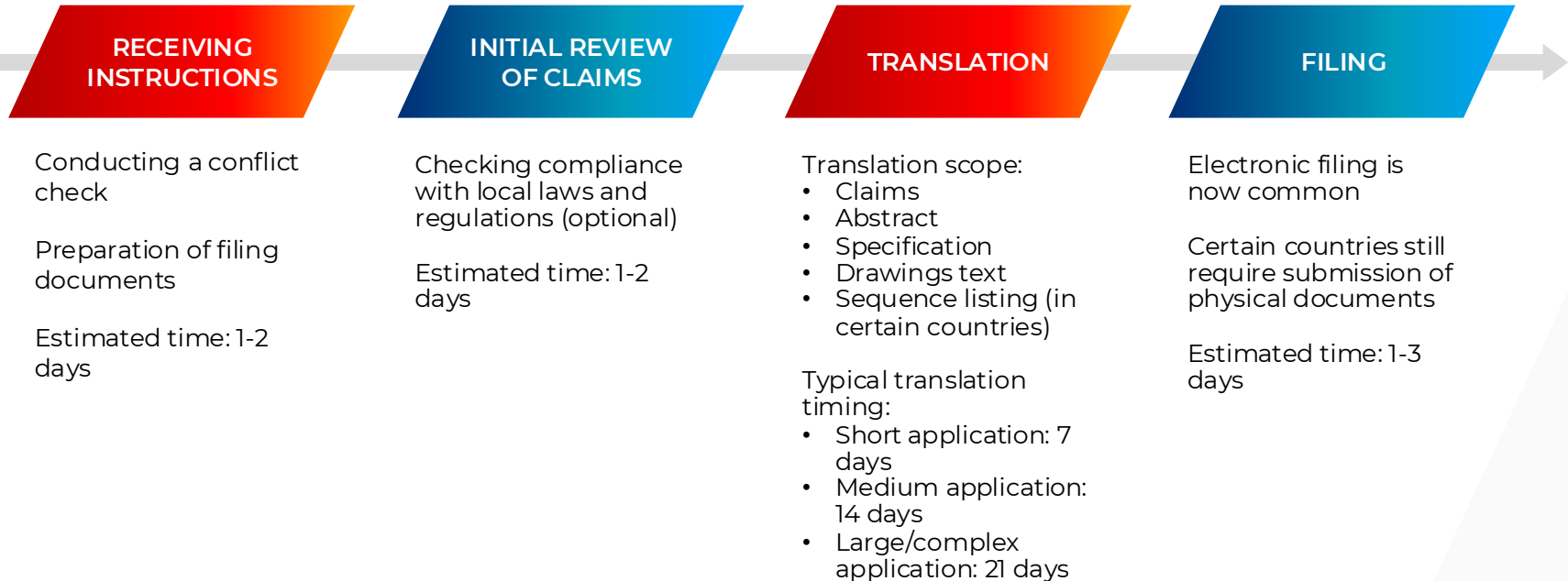
BASIC FILING REQUIREMENTS



USUALLY REQUIRED WITHIN 3-6 MONTHS FROM FILING



FILING PROCESS MANAGED BY CWB



TRANSLATION WORKFLOW

Languages commonly required:

- Arabic (most MENA jurisdictions)
- French (Morocco, Algeria)
- Additional certification required in several countries

Technical translation handled by specialised patent translators

Quality review is conducted

Final formatting prepared according to local office requirements



TIMELINES, CHALLENGES AND CLIENT SUPPORT

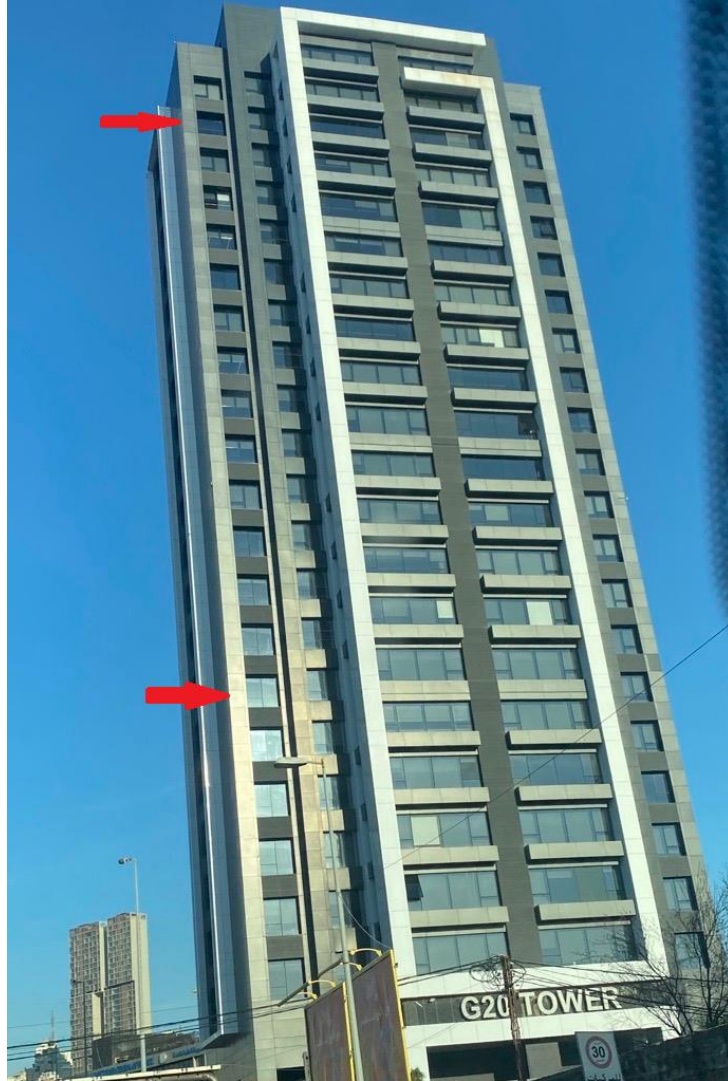
Marianne Raphael

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CWB BEIRUT OFFICE AND TEAM



TYPICAL PATENT PROSECUTION TIMELINES

COUNTRY	EXAMINATION TIMELINE	AVERAGE GRANT TIMELINE
UAE	1-2 years	3-5 years
Bahrain	1-2 years	3-5 years
KSA	1-2 years	3-6 years
Morocco	1-3 years	3-5 years
Oman	1-3 years	3-6 years
Jordan	1-3 years	3-6 years
Qatar	2-4 years	5-8 years
Kuwait	2-5 years	5-8 years
Egypt	2-5 years	5-10 years

KEY CHALLENGES IN MENA PATENT FILING

DOCUMENT FORMALITIES



Many jurisdictions require:

- Legalised POAs
- Legalised assignments
- Certified translations

ARABIC TRANSLATION ACCURACY



Poor translations may:

- Narrow claim scope
- Create inconsistencies
- Delay examination

VARYING PRACTICES



Each country has:

- Different procedures
- Different examination standards
- Different legalisation thresholds

IMPACT OF THE MIDDLE EAST WAR

- In the initial phase of the war, there were internet outages and staff shortages at the patent offices, but these are resolved and there is a semblance of “business as usual”
- Deadlines for filing and prosecution are being met
- No marked decline in filing volumes or the functioning of the various patent offices

CWB PATENT SERVICES

Services covered:

- Regional filing coordination
- Deadline management
- Arabic translation coordination
- Local agent management
- Prosecution handling
- Formality compliance
- Portfolio strategy support

Advantages in practice:

- Centralized MENA coordination
- Reduced administrative burden
- Consistent reporting
- Streamlined communication
- Regional prosecution expertise



REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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PATENT FILING ROUTES

PCT NATIONAL PHASE APPLICATIONS

Most MENA countries have 30-month national phase entry deadline

Expertise of foreign patent examiners is often relied upon

VALIDATION OF EUROPEAN PATENTS

EPO has validation agreements with non-member states

- Morocco
- Tunisia

Claims to be translated into French or Arabic

GCC* APPLICATIONS

No longer a unified GCC patent

Less relevant now – direct filing trend since national patent laws were updated, providing clearer, faster and more robust protection

DIRECT NATIONAL APPLICATIONS

Consider the direct route for non-PCT members – Lebanon and Yemen

* The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a political and economic alliance of six states in the Arab Gulf: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, KSA, and the UAE.

PCT in the MENA Region





EPO Validation Agreements



European patents
can be validated in
Morocco and
Tunisia

Gulf Cooperation Council Member States



-  GCC applications can still be filed
-  National patent applications are required

Non-PCT Members



Consider direct
national
applications for
non-PCT members
Lebanon and
Yemen

MENA SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Many MENA countries have strict deadlines for entry into national phase and restoration procedures are uncertain (e.g. the UAE has a strict 30-month deadline for entry into the national phase)
- Reinstatement of rights is difficult to obtain and reliant on consideration by the examiners
- Certain countries allow reinstatement but only with a valid excuse for "unintentional" failure and rapid action after realising the missed deadline

'PROBLEMATIC' JURISDICTIONS

ALGERIA

Deadlines rigid
Amendments only allowed within 30 days from filing

SAUDI ARABIA

New online filing system problematic and unpredictable
Deadlines to be met during public holidays because filing system remains operational

EGYPT

Examination reports vague, citations difficult to understand
Time extensions not available for any deadlines

YEMEN

The IP offices of Sana'a (North) and Aden (South) are split because of ongoing civil conflict

IRAQ

Legalisation is exceptionally time-consuming and the deadline is not extendable

Less 'problematic':

- UAE (permits filing and examination in English; no legalisation needed for PoAs)
- Kuwait (less problematic for filing and claim requirements)
- Oman (less problematic for filing and claim requirements)

PATENT FILING DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:



Verify key details (nationalities of inventors, specific point of contact, etc.)



Send instructions consistently to the designated contact person



Identify the party responsible for preparing translations in your initial instructions



Share your strategy at the earliest stages of the filing process



Request pre-filing review and amendment



Conform the claims to match foreign granted or allowed counterparts



Use the opportunity of substantive amendments to add formality-related amendments



Send responses to examination reports as early as possible

DON'T:



Do not delay communication



Do not send filing instructions too close to the deadline



Do not make last-minute changes to initial instructions, or request corrections and additions immediately before the filing deadline

LITIGATION CONSIDERATIONS

- Litigation in the MENA region is infrequent and occurs predominantly in the GCC countries, especially UAE and KSA
- Typically no specialised IP courts – litigation takes place in civil or commercial courts
- Focus on pharmaceutical and petrochemical industries
- Large damages awards are rare
- Criminal penalties exist for infringement

DIFC option for patent litigation

- Dubai International Finance Centre operates as a common law jurisdiction
- Independent from the onshore UAE civil law system
- Parties can submit to the jurisdiction of the DIFC courts for disputes across the MENA region
- The DIFC IP law adopts an "equivalent" test of infringement



STRATEGIC FILING AND PROSECUTION OF PATENTS IN MENA COUNTRIES

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PATENT FILING AND PROSECUTION STRATEGIES

- Wide vs. Narrow Claim Approach
- Pre-Filing Amendments
- Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH)
- Typical Objections Raised by Examiners
- MENA Prosecution Considerations

WIDE VS. NARROW CLAIM APPROACH



Often a balance between the approaches

MENA: With normally two or less office actions and the compounding effect of translations on time and costs, the narrow claim approach is more appropriate

PRE-FILING AMENDMENTS

Pre-filing claim review is advisable to account for varying, country-specific legal and formal requirements

Conform claims to those of foreign granted counterparts

- Such amendments are persuasive, particularly if they address objections raised in the IPRP of a PCT international application
- Especially in Algeria where no amendments are permitted beyond one month from the national filing date

Comply with country-specific requirements

- Multiple dependent claims
- In UAE, no more than 50 claims are permitted
- KSA
 - Description
 - Claims of same preamble grouped together
 - Reference numerals in claims

PATENT PROSECUTION HIGHWAY

COUNTRY	PPH AGREEMENTS WITH
Saudi Arabia	USA, Japan, South Korea, China, EU, Singapore, France, Morocco
Morocco	Saudi Arabia, USA, Japan, Spain
Bahrain	Japan
Egypt	China
Other MENA countries	It is not clear if foreign granted patents carry any influence; however, they should be mentioned if claims match with granted claims

PCT examination report carries weight in most MENA countries

- Option to amend upon filing to anticipate a similar first office action
- Often cited verbatim

TYPICAL OBJECTIONS RAISED BY EXAMINERS

CLAIMS

Saudi Arabia:

- Reference numbers
- Clarity – “relative terms”, “about”
- Open ended ranges – “more than”
- Negative claiming – “excluding”

UAE:

- “Preferably” and “optionally” are problematic – the applicable subject matter should be moved to separate claims

Multiple dependent claims

SPECIFICATION

Saudi Arabia:

- Units according to IUPAP/SI
- Chemical names according to IUPAC
- Discuss prior art

PHARMA and CHEMICAL

Pharma – generally very strict with regard to methods of treatment and second use

Generally strict with regard to wide claims not supported by an example of each possible molecule or composition, especially in Egypt

MENA PROSECUTION CONSIDERATIONS: SUMMARY

- Narrow claim approach
- Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH)
- Voluntary amendments upon filing
- Lower claim number in UAE and Saudi Arabia
- Pharma claims

Q&A: ASK OUR EXPERTS



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CWVB

THANK YOU!