

Value of claims brought to DIFC Courts exceeds AED 10 billion in 2018



- *DIFC Courts heard 670 cases across all divisions in 2018, revealing a 29% increase year-on-year, with the overall value increasing by 422%*
- *Steady growth in 2018 was driven by the Court of First Instance (CFI), with the total value of claims amounting to AED 10.2 billion*
- *2018 was marked by DIFC Courts' commitment to innovation and to forging international judicial and academic partnerships*

Dubai, United Arab Emirates; 20 February 2019: The Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Courts today released its annual figures for the full year of 2018, with total a volume of 670 cases across all divisions, revealing a 29% increase year-on-year. The overall value of claims saw a significant increase of 422% over the same period, revealing a surge in growth as well as greater business certainty in the English-language common law courts.

COMMERCIAL CLAIMS SURGE IN MAIN COURT

The volume of cases of the main Court of First Instance (CFI) grew substantially in 2018, increasing by 50% year-on-year, signaling strong business confidence in the DIFC Courts. The total value of cases in the same period, including arbitration-related cases, amounted to AED 10.2 billion up from AED 400 million in 2017, primarily driven by two high profile transnational disputes.

Cases brought before the CFI covered a range of sectors including banking and finance, construction, real estate and manufacturing which involve disputes related to breach of contract, outstanding payments, wills and probate, and employment. There was also a noticeable increase in the number of opt-in cases in 2018, with over 60% of claims in the CFI originating from parties electing to use the DIFC Courts to resolve their disputes.

Reinforcing the Courts' record of certainty for business through enforceable judgments, the total value of enforcement claims filed amounted to AED 10.2 billion in 2018, an increase of 197% (2017: AED 3.4 billion). The number of cases increased considerably by 101% with 185 enforcement cases in 2018, rising from 92

cases in the same period in 2017.

SMALL CLAIM TRIBUNAL BOOSTING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Small Claims Tribunal (SCT) experienced steady growth year-on-year, with its case load increasing by 10% to 399 claims in 2018 (2017: 363 cases). This growth was driven primarily by breach of contract cases which represented 43% of all SCT cases in 2018, followed by labour and employment (27%). Reinforcing the SCT's increasing popularity for business trading, the total value of claims increased by 47% in 2018, rising from AED 36.2 million to AED 53.3 million.

Zaki Bin Azmi, Chief Justice, DIFC Courts, said: *"The DIFC Courts experienced substantial growth in 2018, in both the volume and value of claims brought to the courts. These results reflect the confidence in the DIFC Courts and are testament to the Courts as a jurisdiction of choice in the Middle East and to our creation of an environment which business both domestically and internationally can trust, one in which contracts can be enforced and disputes resolved fairly and swiftly. Our goal for 2019 is to continue to reinforce this certainty and predictability and to deliver a comprehensive suite of public services for the good of the communities we serve."*

INNOVATION POWERING SERVICE EXCELLENCE

2018 was also marked by a commitment to harnessing new technologies in order to drive service and judicial excellence. In February, the DIFC Courts became the first court in the Middle East to introduce a new e-bundling service to allow court documents to be uploaded from anywhere in the world. A landmark taskforce with Smart Dubai was also announced in 2018, the first step towards creating the world's first Court of the Blockchain at DIFC Courts.

At the end of 2018, the International Consortium for Court Excellence (ICCE) Conference 2018 was held in the UAE for the first time ever and hosted by the DIFC Courts. The forum invited delegates from around the world to discuss the developments taking place in court innovation, service excellence and exploration of future technologies and their legal implications on courts.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Marking over a decade of full operations in 2018, the DIFC Courts expanded its reach by forging partnerships and alliances with leading courts and academic institutions from around the world.

In May, the DIFC Courts signed a unique memorandum with the University of Oxford's China Centre to pool expertise in order to protect global business along the \$5 trillion Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This partnership was followed by tie ups with both the Hong Kong High Court as well as a special focus on "trans-systemic" law and preparing lawyers and judges to work across the world's jurisdictions through cooperation with Canada's McGill University Faculty of Law.

To review the full 2018 results for DIFC Courts, please see the 2018 Annual Report here

<https://www.difccourts.ae/2019/02/19/difc-courts-annual-review-2018/>