

WOMEN IN LAW: MAKING AN IMPACT BEYOND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

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Tags: [cn1](#), [International Women's Day](#), [Novartis](#), [Riham Naim](#)



With Suzan Taha

In honor of International Women's Day, we had the privilege to speak with [Riham Naim](#) (pictured), Head of Legal Gulf at Novartis, who is a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. We discussed the challenges that women in the legal profession have faced historically, progress made towards gender equality, and the role of male allies in promoting gender equality in the workplace. We also looked ahead to identify some of the most pressing issues facing women in the legal profession and ways to address these challenges.

Can you discuss some of the challenges that women in the legal profession have faced historically, and what progress has been made towards gender equality?

I think, especially in the Middle East region, there was a high perception that this job is a manly one, or that you need to be loud to be respected and seen. KUDO to all female leaders in this profession who were able to make it while keeping their genuine selves! Big respect to males in our lives who helped us, either on the professional side or personal, to succeed!

How can male allies in the legal profession best support their female colleagues and promote gender equality within their workplaces?

Male allies can support their female colleagues and promote gender equality in several ways. Firstly, by setting the right tone about Diversity & Inclusion (wider than gender equality), providing the right support & flexibilities to female associates who are really delivering strong impact, and sharing success stories. Most important, educating people about what biases are? That it's okay to have it, but we need to be aware of it to decide on the right thing to do.

Looking ahead, what do you think are some of the most pressing issues facing women in the legal profession, and what can be done to address these challenges?

The woman herself! It might be a shocking answer, but truly, after 20+ experience, challenges have no gender, neither does opportunity. If you have a strong belief in this, you will turn challenges into opportunities! Have the right mindset; focus on a balanced work life set up, shout out for help when you need it, select your employer – choose to be where you can have an impact & embrace being a female!

As we celebrate International Women's Day, it is important to acknowledge the progress that has been made towards gender equality in the legal profession while recognizing the work that still needs to be done. By promoting diversity and inclusion, advocating for equal opportunities, and supporting each other, we can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive workplace for all.

About Riham Naim

Riham Naim is a highly accomplished lawyer with extensive experience in corporate law, M&A transactions, and commercial litigation. She is currently the Head of Legal Gulf at Novartis, where she leads a team of legal professionals and provides strategic legal advice to support the business objectives of the company.

Prior to joining Novartis, Riham worked as a lawyer in several prestigious law firms, where she gained expertise in a range of legal areas, including banking and finance, insurance, and real estate. She has advised both local and international clients on complex legal matters and has successfully represented clients in high-profile commercial disputes.