

Sassi Riar

Senior Associate

Washington DC

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Languages spoken

Urdu | English



About Sasshi

Sassi Riar is a member of the Government Investigations & White Collar Practice, specializing in white collar criminal defense, regulatory enforcement and internal investigations. She helps clients facing allegations of criminal, civil and regulatory violations navigate legal challenges, avoid prosecution and minimize potential harm.

With six years of experience in the Middle East prior to returning to Washington DC, Sasshi has deep expertise in handling cases related to economic sanctions, anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing (AML-CTF) laws, export controls, bribery and corruption and bank fraud. She is a Certified Global Sanctions Specialist (CGSS) and regularly counsels senior management across the Middle East, the Levant, Europe and South Asia on multijurisdictional financial crime investigations and enforcement actions involving US, EU, UN and UK sanctions regimes.

Sassi conducts high-level compliance assessments, evaluating industry standards, legal requirements and international best practices to identify potential vulnerabilities or conduct issues that could lead to enforcement actions. She works closely with senior executives to develop tailored solutions, address compliance gaps, enhance internal controls and mitigate risks to business operations.

In 2021, Sasshi was selected by a multinational telecommunications services provider, currently operating in 16 countries across Asia, the Middle East and Africa, for an extended secondment, due to her in-depth knowledge of sanctions and money laundering laws. During her secondment, Sasshi provided sanctions compliance and anti-money laundering advisory counsel, drafted a group-level global sanctions and export controls policy, presented a sanctions and export controls training for more than 100 globally situated employees, and conducted a risk assessment of each of its subsidiaries.

Experience

- Representing foreign financial institutions, primarily in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, in investigations of potential violations of US sanctions and money laundering laws, including representation before OFAC, the Department of Justice, US Attorneys' Offices and other US and home-country enforcement agencies and regulators.

- Represented a global, GCC-based bank in defending and resolving a multiyear OFAC investigation with the issuance of a non-public cautionary letter and no finding of violation or monetary penalty.
- Represented National Commercial Bank, Saudi Arabia's largest bank, in defending and settling a multiyear OFAC investigation of apparent violations of US sanctions against Sudan and Syria.
- Represented Habib Bank Limited, Pakistan's largest bank, in liquidating its New York branch without further enforcement action by the Federal Reserve or the New York Department of Financial Services.
- Advised a regional bank on BSA/AML and sanctions matters related to loans, trade finance and customer due diligence.
- Represented a global food production and distribution company in internal investigation of alleged sanctions violations and deceptive business practices by senior executives.
- Investigated allegations made by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) in the Panama, Paradise and Pandora Papers against prominent persons.
- Investigated whistleblower allegations involving certain key executives of an international financial institution.
- Designed a sanctions and AML compliance program for a multinational telecommunication services provider operating in 16 countries across Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Credentials

Education

- The George Washington University, J.D., 2014
- The George Washington University, B.A., 2010

Admissions

- District of Columbia, 2017
- New York, 2015

Recognitions

- Recognized as a key lawyer in the firm team across Europe, the Middle East and Africa for Compliance and Investigations by *The Legal 500 Europe, Middle East & Africa 2021*

Expertise

Services

- Government Investigations & White Collar

About our firm

One of the world's strongest integrated law firms, providing insight at the point where law, business and government meet. We deliver commercially focused business solutions by combining our legal, lobbying and political capabilities and invaluable connections on the ground to a diverse mix of clients, from long-established leading corporations to emerging businesses, startup visionaries and sovereign nations. More than 1,500 lawyers in over 40 offices across four continents provide unrivaled access to expertise.