



Alla M. Taher

Senior Associate

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About

Alla Taher (AI) focuses his practice on regulatory compliance matters, white-collar crime and internal investigations, and immigration matters. AI's practice includes representing clients in matters involving fraud prevention and recovery, cyber-crime, antitrust, anti-money laundering compliance, and commercial litigation.

AI represents clients in a wide range of industries, including banking, payment processing, financial services, energy, information technology, consumer products and retailers. As a Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist® (CAMS), he excels in conducting investigations, offering regulatory guidance, and preventing fraud related to criminal activities and intricate financial transactions involving laundered funds.

AI has a depth of experience in all aspects of immigration law, including employment and family-based immigration petitions, I-9 employment eligibility verification compliance, and naturalization law. He has successfully assisted several clients with submitting petitions for H-1B Specialty Occupations, O-1A Extraordinary Ability, E-3 Australian Nationals in Specialty occupations, I-130 family-based petitions, and N-400 application for naturalization.

AI joined Kelley Drye from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), where he held multiple positions from 2012-2023. Notably, AI served as a designated national security attorney with Top Secret security clearance and a Deputy Chief Counsel at the DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Chicago. In these roles, AI managed legal support for Homeland Security Investigations, advising on complex issues like privacy, border searches, asset forfeiture, and cyber-crime. AI provided legal advice and support to several hundred agents within multiple offices across Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. AI also helped manage ICE's denaturalization program, providing legal guidance, training, and oversight to over 100 designated denaturalization attorneys, special agents, and officers nationwide. AI's unique perspectives are particularly helpful to clients who are the subject of government investigations and enforcement actions.

AI is a Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist® (CAMS) by the Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists (<https://www.acams.org/en>). CAMS is recognized as the gold standard in AML certifications by clients, law enforcement and regulators. Specialists must pass a comprehensive exam in addition to having the substantive AML career experience. This certification complements AI's 12 years of work at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Al is a fluent Arabic speaker and also possess cultural fluency having previously resided in the Middle East.

Experience

Advised a large pharmacy store chain on Anti-Money Laundering compliance issues related to its pre-paid access cards sold on Cash Apps, and reporting requirements stemming from money services business.

Representing an American sports equipment specialty retailer in an anti-trust investigation.

Advised a cloud-based software company on immigration compliance, including challenges related to H1-B visa, and review of the new I-9 Employment Verification Third Party Servicer Agreement.

Successfully defended client in an immigration matter involving deportation for crimes committed several as a minor. DHS cancelled the removal proceedings, allowing client to maintain lawful permanent resident status.

Successfully defended a restaurant supply retailer in federal and Illinois court against wage and hour claims.

Defending client in an immigration matter involving white collar crime – wire fraud conviction.

Conducted I-9 Internal Audit as part of due diligence review relating to private equity firm's majority investment in a company.

Successfully transitioned a client holding an F-1 student visa with Optional Practical Training to an O-1A extraordinary ability visa, after establishing the client's extraordinary ability in the field of financial technology and corporate finance.

Honors

DHS Office of the General Counsel's Excellence Award, 2016-2017.

Principal Legal Advisor's Outstanding Achievement Award for Legal Writing, 2016.

Related Services

CFIUS and Foreign Investment Reviews

Commercial Litigation

Export Controls and Economic Sanctions

Litigation

White Collar, Investigations and Compliance

Education

Loyola University Chicago School of Law, J.D., 2011

- Deans List
- Executive Board of Public Interest Law Reporter, assistant features editor

DePaul University, B.A., 2008

- magna cum laude
- Political Science

Admissions

Illinois, 2011

Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals-Seventh Circuit

U.S. District Court-Northern District of Illinois

Languages

Arabic