

# GMS Flash Alert

Immigration

2025-270 | 12 December 2025



## Saudi Arabia – Localization Mandate in Private Sports Centers and Gyms from November 2026

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD), in partnership with the Ministry of Sports, announced the implementation of a new Saudization policy requiring the localization of 12 specific jobs in private sector sports centers and gyms, effective November 18, 2026.<sup>1</sup>

### WHY THIS MATTERS

This development introduces a mandatory Saudization rate of 15 percent for establishments with four or more employees in the sports and fitness sector. Non-compliance may result in legal penalties, increasing operational and reputational risk. The policy may also affect expatriate employees currently occupying localized roles, potentially necessitating role changes, redeployment, or contract modifications.

### Key Highlights

- **Targeted Professions:** The 12 localized roles include sports coach, professional football coach, sports supervisor, personal trainer, professional athletics coach, among others.
- **Scope and Applicability:** Applies to men's and women's sports centers and gyms in the private sector with four or more employees.
- **Support Programs:** Establishments can access recruitment, training, qualification, employment, and retention assistance through MHRSD and the Human Resources Development Fund (HADAF).
- **Compliance Requirements:** The MHRSD has published a procedural guide detailing all facets of the decision, localization percentage, and targeted professions. Legal penalties will be applied for non-compliance.
- **Implementation Oversight:** The Ministry of Sports will oversee implementation to align with labor market needs.

## KPMG INSIGHTS

In light of the change, organizations may wish to review the procedural guide published by the MHRSD, audit current staffing levels, and engage with support programs for recruitment, training, and retention of Saudi nationals. Early communication with affected employees and adjustment of contracts may help mitigate transition risks.

If assignees and/or their programme managers have any questions or concerns about the scope of the directive, its application and potential impacts, and appropriate next steps, they should consult with their qualified immigration professional or a member of the GMS/People Services team with KPMG in the Lower Gulf (see the Contacts section).

---

### FOOTNOTE:

1 Saudi Gazette, “Saudi Arabia to localize 12 jobs in private sports centers and gyms after one year,” published on 24 November 2025.

\* \* \* \*

## Contact Us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional\* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in the United Arab Emirates:



**Samar Abdelrahman**  
**Associate Director**  
Tel. + 971 44 030 301  
[sabdelrahman1@kpmg.com](mailto:sabdelrahman1@kpmg.com)



**Pranav Shah**  
**Director**  
Tel. +971 4 356 9866  
[pshah27@kpmg.com](mailto:pshah27@kpmg.com)

*\* Please note the KPMG International member firm in the United States does not provide immigration or labour law services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.*

**The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in the United Arab Emirates.**

© 2025 KPMG Lower Gulf Limited, KPMG LLP and KPMG LLC, licensed in the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman, and member firms of the KPMG global organization of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee. All rights reserved.

[www.kpmg.com](http://www.kpmg.com)

Some or all of the services described herein may not be permissible for KPMG audit clients and their affiliates or related entities.

Learn about us:



[kpmg.com](http://kpmg.com)

© 2025 KPMG LLP, a Delaware limited liability partnership and a member firm of the KPMG global organization of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. USCS001250-2F

The KPMG name and logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of KPMG International. The KPMG name and logo are trademarks used under license by the independent member firms of the KPMG global organization.

KPMG LLP is the U.S. firm of the KPMG global organization of independent professional services firms providing Audit, Tax and Advisory services. The KPMG global organization operates in 147 countries and territories and has more than 219,000 people working in member firms around the world.

Each KPMG firm is a legally distinct and separate entity and describes itself as such. KPMG International Limited is a private English company limited by guarantee. KPMG International Limited and its related entities do not provide services to clients.

*GMS Flash Alert* is a publication of the KPMG LLP Washington National Tax practice.

KPMG International Limited is a private English company limited by guarantee and does not provide services to clients. No member firm has any authority to obligate or bind KPMG International or any other member firm vis-à-vis third parties, nor does KPMG International have any such authority to obligate or bind any member firm. The information contained herein is of a general nature and is not intended to address the circumstances of any particular individual or entity. Although we endeavor to provide accurate and timely information, there can be no guarantee that such information is accurate as of the date it is received or that it will continue to be accurate in the future. No one should act on such information without appropriate professional advice after a thorough examination of the particular situation.