

LOT 1: TOR – LAW FIRM/LAWYER FOR LEGAL SERVICES FOR MAG SYRIA.

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) – Syria Programme

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Position Title: Legal Advisor (Retainer) – HR and Employment-Related Services

Duty Station: Damascus (with travel to operational bases as required)

Duration: 12-month renewable retainer, subject to six-month performance evaluation

1. Background and Context

The Mines Advisory Group (MAG) is a humanitarian organisation committed to saving lives and building safer futures by clearing landmines and explosive remnants of war and by enabling conflict-affected communities to rebuild their lives with safety and dignity.

MAG currently operates in North-East Syria (NES) and is in the process of expanding to Damascus and North-West Syria (NWS) to strengthen national mine-action capacity and meet growing operational needs. This expansion increases the complexity of legal and administrative compliance across multiple jurisdictions, requiring continuous oversight of employment practices, staff relations, and organisational obligations under Syrian law.

To ensure full adherence to Syrian labour legislation, social-security provisions, and administrative regulations, MAG seeks to engage a Legal Advisor to provide specialised legal counsel on HR and employment-related matters. The Advisor will work closely with the MAG HR and Administration Manager and Senior Management Team to ensure that employment frameworks, staff contracts, and HR policies are compliant with national law, ethically sound, and aligned with MAG's duty of care, accountability, and fair employment standards.

This engagement aims to strengthen MAG Syria's HR governance framework, mitigate legal and reputational risks, and ensure consistency and transparency in all employment-related practices across the programme.

2. Scope.

The Legal Advisor (Retainer) will provide expert legal advice and representation to support MAG Syria's HR and management functions, ensuring that all employment practices, staff relations, and administrative procedures comply with Syrian law while maintaining alignment with MAG's internal policies and global standards.

3. Key Responsibilities and Scope of Work

Liaising with the HR & Administration Manager – Syria, and in coordination with the Country Director, the Legal Advisor (Retainer) will perform the following functions:

3.1 Legal Advisory and Representation

- Provide legal advice on the interpretation and application of Syrian labour law, employment codes, and social-security obligations.

- Represent MAG before labour offices, governmental departments, and administrative authorities on employment-related matters.
- Prepare and review legal correspondence, filings, and documentation required for statutory compliance.

3.2 Policy and Contractual Compliance

- Review and validate template employment contracts, consultancy agreements, and related amendments.
- Conduct legal reviews of HR policies, handbooks, and administrative procedures to ensure compliance with Syrian legislation.
- Draft and update clauses governing recruitment, probation, benefits, disciplinary procedures, and termination in accordance with the Labour Law and relevant decrees.

3.3 Expatriate Legal Support and Liaison

- Facilitate and oversee the processing and renewal of work permits, residency documents, and related authorisations for expatriate staff.
- Liaise with relevant ministries and administrative authorities to ensure full compliance with Syrian legal requirements for expatriate staff.

3.4 Employee Relations and Dispute Resolution

- Provide legal advice on employee relations cases, disciplinary actions, and grievances, ensuring adherence to due process and applicable law.
- Support HR in dispute resolution, including representation before competent authorities where required.
- Provide legal guidance on terminations, redundancies, and other employment decisions to minimise legal and reputational risks.

3.5 Legal Monitoring, Reporting, and Capacity Building

- Monitor and interpret changes in Syrian labour, tax, and social-security legislation affecting MAG's operations.
- Provide periodic legal updates and briefings to HR and management teams.
- Support the development of internal HR and management capacity through legal awareness sessions and compliance briefings.

4. Deliverables

- Legal review of relevant documentation, including but not limited to HR policies, template contracts, handbooks and other employment law related compliance instruments.
- Provide legal support in obtaining and renewing work permits and residency authorisations for MAG's international staff in Syria, liaising directly with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MoSAL), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), and relevant government directorates in Damascus to ensure full regulatory compliance.
- Advise MAG on required documentation, procedural changes, and renewal timelines in accordance with Syrian law, and assist in addressing any administrative or legal challenges related to staff work authorisations.

- Advise on MAG's compliance with the Syrian Labour Law and Social Security Law, ensuring that all national staff are duly registered, contributions are up to date, and employment practices—including contracts, benefits, and working conditions—are consistent with current legal requirements.
- Provide periodic updates on legislative amendments or circulars issued by MoSAL and other competent authorities that may affect MAG's HR or employment frameworks in Syria.
- Biannual report summarising key legal risks, actions taken, and recommendations. **6.**
- **Duration and Performance Evaluation**
- This engagement is established as a 12-month renewable retainer, with a performance evaluation after six (6) months to assess service quality, responsiveness, and contribution to MAG Syria's compliance framework.
- The position will be physically based in Damascus, with occasional travel to other operational locations as required.

6. Qualification and Experience Requirements

- Licensed attorney registered with the Syrian Bar Association.
- Minimum of ten (10) years of professional experience in labour, employment, or administrative law.
- Demonstrated experience providing legal services or retainers to international NGOs or UN agencies in Syria.
- In-depth knowledge of Syrian labour law, social-security systems, and expatriate employment procedures.
- Strong legal drafting, negotiation, and advisory skills.
- Fluency in Arabic and English (written and spoken).

7. Confidentiality and Professional Conduct

- The Legal Advisor (Retainer) shall maintain absolute confidentiality of all information, records, and discussions obtained during the engagement. All services must be performed in accordance with MAG's Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, and Conflict-of-Interest Standards, ensuring full respect for data protection and ethical obligations.

89. Administrative and Financial Arrangements

- Retainer fees will be paid monthly, contingent on satisfactory performance and deliverables.
- Any additional services outside the agreed scope must be pre-approved in writing by the HR & Administration Manager.
- The Legal Advisor (Retainer) shall issue official invoices in accordance with Syrian tax regulations and provide all required documentation for compliance.

