

Sarah Z. Vasani

Independent Arbitrator

Languages: English (native) Spanish (fluent)

Nationalities: British, American

Bar Qualifications: England & Wales, Texas, D.C.



Sarah Vasani is globally-renowned international arbitrator and the founder of Vasani International Arbitration (“VIA”), a London-based chambers from which she serves as a full-time independent arbitrator. In that regard, Sarah sits exclusively as arbitrator and no longer accepts instructions as counsel.

Prior to launching VIA in August 2025, Sarah spent over 20 years in international law firms across two continents, including 10 as partner. In that capacity, she led large teams of lawyers in dozens of international arbitration disputes worth several billions of dollars in aggregate. Specifically, she was Co-Head of the International Arbitration at CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP, where she led the firm’s high-stakes disputes practice with responsibility for the firm’s lawyers in the UK, Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Türkiye, Singapore, and parts of Latin America. Her earlier roles included five years as Head of Investor-State Dispute Resolution at Addleshaw Goddard LLP in London, and nearly a decade at King & Spalding LLP, where she worked across the Houston, Washington D.C., and London offices.

Sarah has acted as both lead advocate and arbitrator in dozens of high-value international arbitrations across a range of arbitral institutions including ICSID, UNCITRAL, LCIA, ICC, SIAC, ICDR, SCC, HKIAC, and DIAC, and under various common and civil governing laws, BITs, IIAs, including the ECT, OIC, and the ASEAN treaties. She is dual-qualified in England & Wales and the U.S. (Texas and Washington D.C.), and a Solicitor-Advocate of the Higher Courts of England & Wales.

Sarah’s sectoral expertise spans aviation, banking, energy, mining, oil and gas, renewables, shipping and infrastructure, with substantial experience in large-scale projects across Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, and Latin America.

Sarah is recognised as a global thought leader in the field of international arbitration, and is highly commended for her legal, interpersonal, and case management skills. Who’s Who Legal and Global Arbitration Review have recognised Sarah each since 2017, ranking her as a “*Global Thought Leader*” and describing her as “*a truly inspirational lawyer, she is outgoing, authentic and has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the law.*” The publication notes that she is “*always prepared*”, “*very bright and easy to work with*”, and adept at finding “*practical solutions to complex cases.*”

Legal 500 remarks that Sarah is “*among the best of her generation*” and “*an excellent lawyer*”. Chambers describes her as being “*very creative in her approach*”, “*a great advocate*”, and “*strategic, pragmatic and business-oriented*”. In terms of her interpersonal and case management skills, Chambers Global 2024 reports that “*Sarah is extremely personable and very easy to deal with. She is completely on top of what everyone is meant to be doing. She makes sure the right people are on things*”

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at the right time." Sarah was also recognised in Legal 500's inaugural International Arbitration Powerlist in 2019, and she remains part of its latest Powerlist.

Sarah has spoken and published extensively on topics relating to international arbitration and cross-border disputes, including resolving energy disputes, improving efficiency in international arbitration, climate change disputes and the transition to net zero, arbitration with states and state-owned entities, arbitral award enforcement, corruption, and diversity in international arbitration.

Representative commercial arbitration experience

- *As Arbitrator*

- ▶ **Acting as presiding arbitrator** in a USD 32 Million LCIA arbitration between a global energy company and US based Refinery relating to a dispute over a crude oil supply agreement. Dispute is governed by New York Law, seated in London.
- ▶ **Acting as sole arbitrator** in a LCIA arbitration concerning an alleged payment default for certain fertiliser. Shipments. The matter involves Zambian and Emirati parties and is being conducted under the 2020 LCIA Arbitration Rules, with English law governing the arbitration's substance and procedure.
- ▶ **Acting as presiding arbitrator** in a dispute concerning the transport and sales of 40,000 MT of gasoil. The dispute concerns UK and Ghanaian parties and is being conducted under the 2020 LCIA Arbitration Rules, with English law governing the substance and procedure of the dispute. The matter involves a nonparticipating respondent party and parallel Ghanaian court proceedings.
- ▶ **Acted as presiding arbitrator** in a consolidated multi-party (Swiss, Cypriot and Russian) LCIA arbitration arising out of a MoU and Personal Guarantee concerning payments under a loan agreement. The dispute was conducted under the 2020 LCIA Arbitration Rules, with English law governing the arbitration's substance and procedure. The dispute involved numerous procedural applications, including for bifurcation, emergency measures, the withdrawal of certain claims and parties, and the issuance of an interim cost award.
- ▶ **Acted as sole arbitrator** in a dispute arising from back-to-back aircraft purchase and sale agreements governed by English law. The arbitration was conducted under the 2014 LCIA Rules and seated in London. The matter involved a non-participating respondent party and parallel U.S. state court proceedings in Oklahoma.
- ▶ **Acted as sole arbitrator** in a dispute arising out of a program partnership agreement for the provision of private aircraft hire. The arbitration was conducted under the 2014 LCIA Rules and seated in London, with English law governing.
- ▶ **Acted as co-arbitrator on a three-member tribunal**, where the parties' dispute concerned their respective obligations under an English-law governed joint venture shareholder agreement concerning a real estate project in Scotland. The arbitration was conducted under the 2014 LCIA Arbitration Rules and seated in London.
- ▶ **Acted as presiding arbitrator** in an aviation dispute concerning the parties' respective obligations under a Component Support Agreement, pursuant to which the claimant supplier provided the respondent customer certain services for the supply, repair, and overhaul of aircraft components for use in the respondent's aircraft. The arbitration was conducted under the 2014 LCIA Arbitration Rules, seated in London, and governed by English law.

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- *As Counsel*

- ▶ **Acting as lead counsel for a major US-based technology company** in a DIFC-LCIA arbitration concerning alleged breaches of a Teaming Agreement to provide smart metering services to a UAE water and electricity authority. The arbitration is governed by English law, seated in the DIFC, and valued at USD 100 million.
- ▶ **Served as lead counsel for the largest private Indian construction company** in an ICC proceeding brought by Mozambique and its Ministry of Transportation and Communications in relation to a USD 3 billion deep-water port and rail project. The proceeding was governed by Mozambican law and seated in Maputo.
- ▶ **Acted as counsel for a US oil and gas major** against a port authority in relation to the interpretation of a long-term lease and corresponding commercial arrangements for conservancy dues associated with the passage of ships and goods through the terminal in question. The matter was valued at USD 170 million, governed by English law, and seated in London.
- ▶ **Acted as lead counsel to a Saudi energy company and its Ukrainian subsidiary** in a DIAC arbitration against Chinese EPC contractors concerning the significant delay in the construction of a solar power plant project in Ukraine. The dispute was governed by English law and seated in London.
- ▶ **Acted as lead counsel for a major US-based gas services company** against a Pakistani company in four DIFC-LCIA arbitrations arising out of five contracts and relating to the provision of goods and services for three gas processing facilities in Karachi. The arbitration was governed by English law and seated in Dubai.
- ▶ **Acted as lead counsel for a West African communications and technology company** in a dispute with a West African Central Bank in a high value LCIA arbitration concerning a technology project. The arbitration was governed by Ghanaian law and seated in London.
- ▶ **Acted as lead counsel for the Ministry of Energy of a West African State** in relation to an UNCITRAL arbitration seated in London concerning a dispute under a Build, Operate, Own and Transfer Agreement for a 300MW power station.
- ▶ **Acted as lead counsel for a Ghanaian oil and gas company** in an UNCITRAL arbitration governed by Ghanaian law and seated London, against multinational lending institutions, in relation to the failure of the institutions to disburse loans related to a petroleum storage facility. The representation included defending an anti-suit injunction obtained by the lending institutions (on a without notice basis) before the English courts, allegedly in violation of the parties' LCIA arbitration agreement.
- ▶ **Advised India's largest private oil and gas company** in three UNCITRAL arbitrations against the Indian Government, one in relation to the company's right to cost recovery under a production sharing contract, another relating to gas pricing, and the final in relation to a unitisation dispute.
- ▶ **Advised a major US-based oil and gas services provider** in a dispute with a Kazakh company in three LCIA arbitrations governed by English law and seated in London. The dispute involved three separate agreements to provide goods and services to a gas processing and treatment facility in Kazakhstan (interim services, technical consultancy and O&M agreements).

- ▶ **Advised a major US-based oil and gas services provider** in dispute avoidance strategies in relation to an explosion at a gas processing plant in Pakistan.
- ▶ **Advised one of the world's leading media and entertainment companies** on restructuring its investment in the Middle East and revising its web of layered disputes resolution clauses to maximise legal protection while minimising costs in the event of a dispute between the company and its contracting parties.
- ▶ **Advised a Swiss technology company** in a LCIA arbitration against a US technology corporation concerning a licensing dispute governed by the substantive laws of California and the US, and the procedural laws of England.
- ▶ **Advised a Mexican publishing distributor** in a London-based LCIA arbitration in a dispute with a Greek publishing house. The dispute concerned the breach of an exclusive distribution agreement, which expanded to include copyright claims and criminal matters.

Representative investment arbitration experience

Sarah has acted in dozens of investor state disputes over the course more than two decades and frequently lectures on matters concerning the investor state dispute resolution system.

Bar Admissions

- ▶ Solicitor-Advocate of the Higher Courts of England and Wales (Civil Division) (2016)
- ▶ Solicitor of the Senior Courts of England and Wales (2013)
- ▶ Washington D.C. (2008)
- ▶ Texas (2006)

Selected Professional Memberships and Activities

- ▶ ICC International Court of Arbitration, Court Member for the United States of America
- ▶ LCIA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Task Force, EDI Champion & Steering Committee Member
- ▶ International Bar Association (“**IBA**”)
 - ▶ IBA Arbitration Committee Task Force on the Revision of the 2016 Report on the Reception of the IBA Soft Law Products, Subgroup on the IBA Guidelines on Conflict of Interest in International Arbitration, Drafting Group Member
 - ▶ IBA Arbitration Committee Task Force on the Nationality of the Arbitrator as a Proxy for Independence and Impartiality, Investment Arbitration Subgroup, Committee Member
- ▶ Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (“**CIArb**”)
- ▶ 2025 CIArb Professional Practice Guidelines on Third-Party Funding in International Commercial Arbitration, Task Force Member and Drafting Committee
- ▶ Institute for Transnational Arbitration, Executive Committee Member and Co-Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee (2025 – present)
- ▶ London International Disputes Week (LIDW), Finance and Sponsorship Committee
- ▶ International Arbitration Charity Ball Committee
- ▶ ArbitralWomen

Education

Vanderbilt University Law School: Juris Doctorate (2006)

Michigan State University:

- ▶ **Bachelor of Arts**, International Relations (2002)
- ▶ **Bachelor of Science**, Agriculture & Natural Resources Communications (2002)
- ▶ **Certified Specializations:** Latin American & Caribbean Studies, Environmental Economics