

Sarah Grimmer

CALL: 1998 (NEW ZEALAND); 2023 (SOLICITOR, HONG KONG)

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Languages: French



Overview

Contact Sarah directly: sgrimmer@twentyessex.com

Sarah joined Twenty Essex in August 2022 as a full-time arbitrator. She has over 20 years of experience in international commercial, investment treaty, and public international law dispute resolution proceedings.

She has built an impressive professional network spanning Europe, the United Kingdom, Asia Pacific (particularly Hong Kong, Mainland China, Singapore, South Korea), Russia, North America, and Australasia.

From 2016 to 2022, Sarah served in the highly public role of Secretary-General of the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC) during which time it was ranked the third most preferred institution in the world. Prior to that, she spent a decade at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague where she administered complex inter-State, investor-State, and contractual disputes involving States, State entities, and intergovernmental organisations.

Sarah has also worked at the ICC International Court of Arbitration (ICC) in Paris administering hundreds of commercial cases under the ICC Rules of Arbitration. Prior to that she worked at Shearman & Sterling LLP in Paris and in private practice in New Zealand.

Appointments in international arbitration and other proceedings

- Presiding Arbitrator, PCA-administered UNCITRAL Rules arbitration under a bilateral investment treaty commenced by a claimant against a Latin American State.

Publications

- 'HKIAC's Experience of the Use of Multi-tier Dispute Resolution Clauses', in *Multi-tier Approaches to the Resolution of International Disputes: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge University Press 2021).
- 'Distinction and Connection: Hong Kong and Mainland China, a View from the HKIAC', *Asia Pacific Arbitration Review* 2020, *Global Arbitration Review*.
- 'Love Me Tender: At which Point in a Tender Process is Investment Treaty Protection Attracted?' in HKIAC (ed), *International Arbitration: Issues, Perspectives and Practice*; Liber Amicorum Neil Kaplan (Wolters Kluwer 2019).
- 'The HKIAC Tribunal Secretary Service: Four Years On', in R. Weeramantry & J. Choong (Gen eds.), *Asian Dispute Review* (October 2018).
- 'Dispute Resolution along the Belt and Road' (with Christina Charemi), *Asia Pacific Arbitration Review* 2018, *Global Arbitration Review*.
- 'Constituting the Tribunal and Challenging its Members: Due Process Issues and Concerns', in A. Menaker (Gen. Ed) *International Arbitration and*

- Presiding Arbitrator, appointed by ICSID in an *ad hoc* arbitration between a Thai state entity and an Australian company under Thai law, Bangkok seat; dispute arising under a Petroleum Concession Agreement.
- Presiding Arbitrator, HKIAC arbitration between Hong Kong and German parties under Hong Kong law, Hong Kong seat; dispute arising under cooperation agreements in audio-technology industry.
- Presiding Arbitrator, SIAC arbitration between Thai, PRC, Hong Kong, and US parties under English law, Singapore seat; dispute under guarantee and share transfer agreements related to construction project.
- Presiding Arbitrator, SIAC arbitration between Hong Kong parties under Singaporean law, Singapore seat; dispute arising under stock loan agreement in finance industry.
- Presiding Arbitrator, SIAC arbitration between Spanish, Singaporean, and Indian parties under Indian law, Singapore seat; dispute arising under share purchase agreements in transport infrastructure industry.
- Sole Arbitrator, four LCIA arbitrations, London seat; dispute arising under power purchase agreements.
- Sole Arbitrator, *ad hoc* arbitration between Singaporean and Vietnamese parties under Singaporean law, Singapore seat; dispute arising under sale and purchase agreement in F&B industry.
- Co-arbitrator, CAS arbitration between Korean and Moroccan parties; dispute regarding qualification for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.
- Co-arbitrator, ICC arbitration between Swiss and Luxembourg companies under the laws of Luxembourg, Luxembourg seat; dispute under coal supply agreement.
- Co-arbitrator, SIAC arbitration between Korean and Vietnamese parties under Singaporean law, Singapore seat; M&A dispute arising in Vietnamese retail industry.
- Co-arbitrator, *ad hoc* arbitration between companies incorporated in the Seychelles and the United Kingdom under Seychelles law; cryptocurrency dispute.
- Co-arbitrator, HKIAC arbitration between parties from the Seychelles and St. Kitts and Nevis under Seychelles law, Hong Kong seat; cryptocurrency dispute.
- Co-arbitrator, ICC arbitration between Korean and French companies under French law, Paris seat; dispute arising under consultant agreement in aviation industry.
- Sole Panellist, ADNDRC domain name dispute under ICANN Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy commenced by global fashion company against Hong Kong entity.
- Disciplinary Board Member, Special Tribunal for Lebanon Disciplinary Board for Defence Counsel and Victim Representatives (2015-2017).
- Tribunal Member, Appeal Board of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (2014-2016).
- Registrar, The Arctic Sunrise Arbitration (*The Netherlands v Russian Federation*) (UNCLOS) (2014).
- Registrar, The Duzgit Integrity Arbitration (*Malta v São Tomé e Príncipe*) (UNCLOS) (2013).
- Secretary, Review Panel Established under the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean (involving Russia, Chile, Chinese Taipei, EU, New Zealand) (2013).
- Registrar, The ARA Libertad Arbitration (*Argentina v Ghana*) (UNCLOS) (2012).

Education

- University of Cambridge: Master of Law (2012)
- Victoria University of Wellington: Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor

the Rule of Law: Contribution and Conformity, ICCA Congress Series No. 19 (Wolters Kluwer 2017).

- 'The Determination of Arbitrator Challenges by the Secretary-General of the PCA', in C. Giorgetti (ed), *Challenges and Recusal of Judges and Arbitrators in International Courts and Tribunals* (Martinus Nijhoff/ Brill 2015).
- 'Pro Bono in International Proceedings at the Permanent Court of Arbitration', *IBA Pro Bono Committee News* (September 2015, No. 3).
- 'Investment arbitration: issue conflicts and non-pecuniary remedies', Report on session of the Arbitration Committee at the IBA Annual Conference in Tokyo, 24 October 2014, *IBA Newsletter*.
- 'The Expanded Role of the Appointing Authority under the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules 2010', *28 Journal of International Arbitration* 5 (2011) 501.

Professional association and taskforce appointments

- Member of the Task Force for the revision of the IBA Guidelines on Conflicts of Interest in International Arbitration (2023).
- International Law Association, Singapore, Member (2023).
- ICC Singapore Enrichment Committee, Member (2023).
- Arbitrator, General Panel, Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) (2022-present).
- Panellist, Asian Domain Name Dispute Resolution Centre (2022-present).
- Arbitration Committee member, Lagos Court of Arbitration (2020-present).
- Council Member, Asian Domain Name Dispute Resolution (2019-present).
- Expert Advisory Committee Member, Permanent Forum of China Construction Law (2019-present).
- Chairperson, MCCI Arbitration and Mediation Council Advisory Board (2017-2020).
- Council Member, International Federation of Commercial Arbitral Institutions (2017-2022).
- Member, ICCA-ASIL Taskforce on Damages (2016-present).
- Member, Global Arbitration Review Board of Advisors (2016).
- Member, ICCA Publications Committee (2015-2018).
- Member, New Zealand ICC Arbitration Committee (2014-present).
- Member, IBA Investment Arbitration

- IBA Arb40 Steering Committee, Member (2013-2017) (contributing author of Toolkit for Award Writing).

Lectures / talks

A selection of speaking engagement is below. A full list is available upon request.

- The Inaugural Sir Ivor Richardson QC Annual Lecture, 'National court support of international arbitration - the review of jurisdictional decisions', Wellington (2023).
- Hong Kong University, Part-time Lecturer, LLM Program (2021).
- Paris Arbitration Week, 'The Rise of Cryptocurrency' (2022).
- California International Arbitration Week, 'Protecting Interests through Interim Relief' (2022).
- CDR Webinar, 'Challenges and Solutions for Belt and Road Disputes' (2022).
- Baker & McKenzie Dispute Resolution Webinar, Keynote Speech: 'International Arbitration in Hong Kong in the Year Ahead' (2022).
- AMINZ Arbitration Day, 'Tribute to Sir David A.R. Williams QC' (2022).
- ICCA-ASIL Taskforce on Damages, Soft Launch (2021).
- VI Oxford Arbitration Day, 'Cybersecurity and International Arbitration', (2021).
- 9th International Society of Construction Law, Keynote speech: 'Chinese Outbound Investment in the Pacific Region and International Dispute Resolution' (2021).
- Stockholm University, LLM Program (2020, 2021).
- Singapore Institute of Arbitrators (SIArb) Webinar, 'Policing the Arbitrators', (2021).
- HKIAC Chinese Arbitration Insights, 'Mainland China and International Investment Arbitration', (2021).
- IX 3/4 St Petersburg International Legal Forum, 'Arbitration in Russia: Forum in Favorem Arbitri' (2021).
- White & Case and Queen Mary University of London, 'Launch of the 2021 International Arbitration Survey', (2021).
- IBA Asia Pacific Arbitration Conference, 'The Rise of Investor-State Arbitration in the Aftermath of the Pandemic', (2020).
- University of Southern California-JAMS Webinar, 'The Future of US-China Commercial Dispute Resolution', (2020).
- The Economist Corporate Network, Asia Regional Strategic Forecast, Business Leader Panel, Hong Kong (2020).

- Russia Arbitration Association Annual Conference, 'Arbitration and Corruption', Moscow (2020).

Recommendations

Sarah is super smart, conscientious, considered, and hard working. She takes nothing for granted and will work tirelessly to get the right answer. No airs or graces, a fierce intellect and highly charming. It is a powerful combination. [The Legal 500 UK Bar 2025](#)

Sarah Grimmer is "one of the most well-known figures" in the region who brings "deep institutional experience", "very sharp intellect" and "time and attention" to her practice. [Who's Who Legal 2023](#)

Sarah Grimmer is 'absolutely excellent' report peers, and 'combines academic intelligence with great management and people skills'. [Who's Who Legal 2022](#)

Sarah Grimmer comes highly recommended as the 'the savviest lawyer in any arbitral institution' and is praised as being 'truly world class' by market sources. [Who's Who Legal 2021](#)

Sarah Grimmer of the HKIAC is a highly accomplished arbitration specialist, with sources lauding her as 'a very impressive lawyer'. [Who's Who Legal 2021](#)

The 'outstanding' Sarah Grimmer of the HKIAC is 'a truly great practitioner'. Her practice runs the gamut of investment treaty and contractual disputes. [Who's Who Legal 2020](#)

Sarah Grimmer 'is a sharp legal mind' who draws praise for her 'invaluable experience in the field' of investment treaty and contractual disputes. [Who's Who Legal 2019](#)