



Philip Punwar

Year of Call: 1989

Direct Access: No

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Philip Punwar is an English qualified practitioner with more than twenty-five years' arbitration experience. He has been resident in Dubai since 2005 and received his Dubai Golden Visa in 2021. During the course of his practice in the UAE, Philip has been leading counsel in multi-million and multi-billion US dollar arbitrations.

His recent arbitral engagements have concerned real-estate Mega Projects in the Gulf, investment treaty claims arising out of the MENA and South Asia regions, aircraft charter agreements, concession agreements in the water sector and technology disputes in the finance and healthcare sectors.

Philip has appeared as counsel before all levels of court in England and the Dubai International Financial Centre, up to and including the Courts of Appeal of each jurisdiction. He was the first practitioner resident in the UAE to be registered as a DIFC Courts advocate, and the first DIFC Courts practitioner to be appointed by the DIFC Courts to the role of Supervising Legal Representative (SLR).

Philip has significant experience of the laws and practices of both civil and common law jurisdictions gained as counsel and arbitrator in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. He has a proven ability to work collaboratively as part of a team and when necessary to assemble and lead interdisciplinary teams of geographically dispersed professionals in the prosecution and defence of complex and high value disputes.

Areas of Expertise

International Arbitration

Philip has been a Chartered Arbitrator since 2001. He has acted as sole, party nominated and presiding arbitrator in ad hoc, ICC, DIAC and LCIA arbitrations seated in the Middle East and Europe. He is a member of the Abu Dhabi Global Markets (ADGM) Panel of Arbitrators and the International Panel of the Arbitration Foundation of Southern Africa (AFSA).

He has appeared as counsel in a wide range of disputes arising out of aircraft charter agreements, agreements for the provision of armed security and logistics in areas of conflict, real-estate development agreements, construction agreements, operating agreements, distribution agreements, investment agreements, production sharing agreements and

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diverse joint venture agreements.

Philip has acted both for and against sovereign and governmental parties in commercial and investment arbitration proceedings, as well as for high-net-worth individuals and family-owned businesses.

Philip was on the DIFC Arbitration Law 2008 Steering Committee. In 2007 he was commissioned by the UAE Federal Ministry of Economy to draft a standalone Federal Arbitration Law. Between 2010 and 2012 he represented ICC UAE at the ICC Commission on Arbitration and ADR.

International Commercial

Philip has over thirty years' litigation experience. He has appeared as counsel before all levels of court in England and the Dubai International Financial Centre, up to and including the Courts of Appeal of each jurisdiction.

In 2006, he was the first practitioner resident in the UAE to be registered as a DIFC Courts advocate. In 2008, he obtained the first Freezing Order issued by the DIFC Courts and appeared in the first ever appeal to the DIFC Court of Appeal.

In 2009, Philip represented the first Claimant to succeed at trial before the DIFC Court of First Instance. In 2014 he was the first Supervising Legal Representative (SLR) appointed by the DIFC Courts and in 2015 he oversaw the execution of the DIFC Court of First Instance's first Search Order.

In 2018, he was appointed by the DIFC Courts to oversee the execution of a DIFC Courts Search Order granted to the Danish Customs and Tax Authority (SKAT). Since 2019, Philip's ongoing appointment as SLR in the SKAT matter has required him to determine a significant volume of privilege claims arising out of the execution of the DIFC Courts' Search Order.

Appointments & Memberships

- Master of the Bench of the Inner Temple since 2013
- Honorary Overseas Member of the Commercial Bar Association (COMBAR) since 2010
- Former Vice Chairman of the UAE Branch of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators
- Former Vice-President of the Arbitration Steering Committee of the ICC UAE
- Past member of the ICC Commission on Arbitration and ADR
- Member of the DIFC Arbitration Law Steering Committee from 2006-2008
- Member of the DIFC Courts Users' Committee from 2006 – 2009 and from 2011 – 2013
- Chairman of the DIFC Courts Code of Conduct Drafting Sub-Committee from 2009 – 2015 Chairman of the DIFC Courts Education Sub-Committee from 2013 – 2015
- Member of the DIFC Courts Rules Sub-Committee/Committee since 2009
- Director of the DIFC Courts Advocacy Training Programme from 2013 – 2015
- Member of the Board of Trustees of the Pegasus Scholarship Trust and former Pegasus Scholar to Hong Kong

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Publications

- The Rules of the DIFC Courts with Commentary and Materials (DIFC Courts/Sweet & Maxwell, 2011)
- Commentary on the DIFC's Contract Law, Implied and Unfair Terms Law and Electronic Transactions Law (The Laws of the DIFC (Vol. 2), DIFC Academy of Law/LexisNexis, 2017/2022)
- Commentary on the DIFC Insolvency Law (The Laws of the DIFC (Vol. 4), DIFC Academy of Law/LexisNexis, 2020/2022)
- A Guide to Arbitration in the UAE (ICC, 2020)
- Philip is an experienced advocacy trainer (Inner Temple/DIFC Courts) and lecturer (International Commercial Arbitration, English Contract Law, DIFC Contract Law and DIFC Courts procedure).

Awards

- Chambers Global – UAE and Middle East Disputes
- Legal 500 EMEA – UAE Disputes
- Whose Who Legal – UAE Commercial Litigation
- Whose Who Legal – UAE Arbitration

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