

Alain Farhad

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Alain Farhad is a full time independent international arbitrator and one of the leading international arbitration lawyers based in the Middle East. As one of the MENA region's most in demand international arbitrators, he has acted as sole arbitrator, co-arbitrator or presiding arbitrator in over 100 arbitration proceedings with several billion dollars in dispute.

After nearly two decades in private practice with several international law firms in Paris and Dubai, Alain started FarhadArbitration in March 2024 in order to devote his full professional time to his work as an independent international arbitrator.

Prior to that, Alain was a partner and the head of international arbitration at Mayer Brown LLP in Dubai. In the course of his career in private practice, Alain has advised and represented as an advocate corporations, States and State-owned entities in commercial, construction and investment protection treaty disputes in over 100 arbitration proceedings, including some of the world's largest. In parallel to his work as counsel, Alain became one of the busiest international arbitrators based in the Middle East having issued over 100 awards in arbitration proceedings with seats in a variety of jurisdictions including Dubai, the DIFC, Abu Dhabi, the ADGM, Doha, the QFC, Riyadh, Tehran, Cairo, Muscat, Kuwait, Geneva, Singapore, Paris and London.

He has experience in a wide range of disputes including those arising from construction, infrastructure, energy and transportation projects, joint venture and shareholding agreements, agency and distributorship agreements, mergers and acquisitions, financial transactions and the sale of goods.

Alain was educated in both the civil law and the common-law traditions having studied law at the Paris Sorbonne University and at the Cornell Law School. He is a French qualified lawyer (*Avocat à la Cour*) and a member of the New York Bar. He speaks Farsi in addition to French and English. Prior to relocating to the Middle East, he practiced international arbitration in Paris.

Among other accolades, he has been recognized as “*exceptionally competent*” and “*a standout individual who is a true expert in international arbitration.*” (legal 500), and a “*Global Leader*” in international arbitration (Who’s Who of International Arbitration).

He has been appointed to serve as a member of the ICC Commission on Arbitration and ADR and serves in the task force on “Addressing issues of corruption in international arbitration” and in the task force on “Expedited procedure provisions”. He has previously served several terms as a member of the Steering Committee of the ICC UAE Arbitration Commission. He is currently a member of the arbitration committee of the DIFC Courts.

He has written extensively on various aspects of arbitration law, in French and in English and is regularly invited to speak at a variety of international arbitration conferences globally.

Experience as Arbitrator

Alain Farhad has acted as an arbitrator (sole arbitrator, chairman or co-arbitrator) in over 100 arbitration proceedings under the rules of the ICC, DIAC, SIAC, LCIA, and DIFC-LCIA as well as in *ad hoc* arbitration proceedings, including proceedings under the UNCITRAL rules. Some of his pending and recent appointments include:

- Appointed by SIAC to to act as the Chairman of the Arbitral Tribunal in an arbitration arising from a joint venture agreement in the energy industry.
- Appointed by DIAC upon the Claimant’s nomination in an arbitration arising from the construction of a hotel in Dubai.
- Appointed by DIAC upon the Claimant’s nomination in an arbitration arising from the construction of an electrical substation in the United Arab Emirates.
- Appointed by the ICC Court upon the joint nomination of the co-arbitrators to act as the Chairman of the Arbitral Tribunal in an ICC arbitration seated in London between a Dutch contractor and an Iraqi State owned oil company.
- Appointed by the ICC Court to act as the Chairman of the Arbitral Tribunal in a large ICC arbitration seated in Doha arising in relation to the construction by a joint venture of an educational facility in the State of Qatar.
- Appointed by the ICC Court to act as the Chairman of the Arbitral Tribunal in an ICC arbitration seated in the DIFC arising in relation to the construction and operation of power generation equipment in Oman.
- Appointed by the ICC Court to act the sole arbitrator in an arbitration seated in Doha and governed by the ICC Expedited Procedure Rules and Qatari law to decide a commercial dispute between a Qatari entity and a Spanish contractor.

- Appointed by the co-arbitrators to act as the Chairman of a DIFC-LCIA Arbitral Tribunal in arbitration proceedings seated in the DIFC and governed by UAE law arising in relation to a distribution agreement between a South Korean manufacturer of electronic equipment and its regional distributor.
- Appointed jointly by the parties to an LCIA arbitration seated in London to act as the sole arbitrator in a commercial dispute governed by English law between a Bahraini entity and an Emirati entity arising in relation to the sale of commodities in the oil and gas industry.
- Appointed by DIAC to serve as the emergency arbitrator in the second claim ever made under the DIAC rules emergency arbitrator provisions.
- Appointed by the co-arbitrators to act as the Chairman of the Arbitral Tribunal in a Dubai seated DIAC arbitration governed by UAE law arising in relation to the construction of a major hospital in the UAE.

Selected Recognition

- “Global Leader”, “a leader in the profession in the Middle East” and “an extremely intelligent and effective lawyer” (*The Who’s Who of International Arbitration*).
- “raises the standard of any dispute” (*Chambers Global*).
- “Alain Farhad is one of the leading arbitration lawyers in the Dubai market. He has great technical expertise both from common law and civil law perspectives having qualified in both New York and Paris. He is clever and highly strategic in his thinking.”, “one of the rising stars of international arbitration”, “a standout individual who is a true expert in international arbitration. As a French qualified lawyer he has a different and more international perspective than many English qualified partners in other firms.”, “exceptionally competent and knowledgeable on disputes concerning construction and wider commercial issues”. (*The Legal 500*).

Selected recent Publications & Speaking Engagements

- ICSID-ADGM Conference on Investment Arbitration, Abu Dhabi, May 2023, delivered a Ted Talk on investment protection in the context of armed conflicts.
- ICSID-ADGM Conference on Investment Arbitration, Abu Dhabi, March 2022, delivered a Ted Talk on the development of investment arbitration in the Middle East.
- GAR Live Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, February 2022, panel discussion on “The UAE Federal Arbitration Act: Now we are three”.

- GAR Live Dubai, Dubai, November 2021, panel discussion on “State Entities in Arbitration” referenced at <https://globalarbitrationreview.com/article/bring-bit-claims-and-avoid-mediation>, Article by Cosmo Sanderson.
- Co-author of the leading Guide to Arbitration in the UAE, ICC, 1st Edition, 2020 (2nd edition in progress).
- Co-author of the MENA Leading Arbitrators’ Guide to International Arbitration, Juris Arbitration Law, 2023.

Bar Admissions

- Paris, France (2007)
- New York, USA (2005)
- Dubai (registered as a legal consultant), UAE (2011)

Selected Professional Affiliations

- Member of the ICC Commission on Arbitration and ADR.
- Member of the ICC Commission task force on “Addressing issues of corruption in international arbitration” and on “Expedited procedure provisions”.
- Member of the Steering Committee of MENA Campaign for Greener Arbitration.
- Former member of the ICC UAE Arbitration Commission Steering Committee.
- Member of the DIFC Courts Arbitration Committee.

Education

- Paris I, Panthéon Sorbonne, Maîtrise en droit international.
- Cornell Law School, LL.M.

Languages

French, English, Farsi

Nationality / Geographic origin

France, Iran