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Alexander Gunning KC

Barrister
Call 1994 Silk 2012



Scope of Practice

• Arbitration (As Counsel) • Civil Fraud and Investigations • Commercial Litigation • Construction and Engineering • Energy, Natural Resoures and Offshore Construction • Infrastructure Disputes • Insurance and Reinsurance • Rail Industry Disputes • Shipping and Commodities

Overview

Alex Gunning KC is an advocate specialising in complex, high-value international disputes with a particular focus on arbitration. He is known for his work in energy & natural resources, offshore construction, shipping & commodities and commercial litigation. He recently represented the Bitcoin developers in their successful defence of the claims by Dr Craig Wright and Tulip Trading Ltd and appeared in the leading Supreme Court case on the availability of anti-suit injunctions in support of arbitration.

Alex chaired the Commercial Bar Association in London between 2023 and 2025. He has previously chaired the ICC's UK arbitrator nomination commission and assisted with the drafting of the present LCIA rules. Alex has a particular interest in disputes arising out of the East and South-East Asia region and was previously the UK representative for the Inter-Pacific Bar Association

Examples of Recent Cases

Energy, Natural Resoures and Offshore Construction

Alex has been involved in a wide range of disputes concerning the mining, drilling and transportation of natural resources as well as the construction of large energy and offshore construction projects. Commonly the disputes arise from projects involving parties from the PRC, South-East Asia, Russia and the CIS. Typically, they are resolved in international arbitration, including in London, Hong Kong, Singapore and Seoul.

Energy and natural resources:

Alex has advised and appeared in disputes concerning exploration for and extraction of natural resources, including disputes between joint venture partners and disputes under drilling contracts. Recent examples (in addition to his offshore construction experience) include the following:

- 2025: Representing Ghanian company in dispute concerning oil and gas joint venture.

- 2025: Representing subcontractor in dispute concerning construction of modules for petrochemical plant.
- 2023-2024: Representing Shell in dispute concerning Greenpeace protest on an FPSO in transit from China to Norway.
- 2023-2024: Representing drilling company in relation to commission claim by intermediary.
- 2022-2024: Representing importers in relation to cancellation of cargoes of coal and oil from Russia
- 2024: Representing purchaser in dispute concerning wind farm in South America.
- 2023: Advising on dispute concerning LNG carriers.
- 2022-2025: Representing seller of shares in JV company with rights to exploit oil/gas blocks.
- 2025: Advising LNG terminal on dispute concerning carbon credits.
- 2022: Representing European supplier in dispute relating to suspension of long term gas/electricity. sales agreement arising from German government intervention following war in Ukraine.
- 2021: Representing coal mine owner in respect of termination of offtake agreement.
- 2020-2021: Representing North African contractor in dispute concerning gas treatment plant.
- 2020: Representing plant owner in dispute concerning defects in waste-to-energy facility.
- 2019: Advising wind farm operator in respect of possible termination of O&M agreement.
- 2019: Providing advice in respect of construction of agreement for supply of materials to biomass power plant.
- 2018: Representing an investor in a US$500m LCIA arbitration arising out of alleged failure to provide funding for the development of gas-fields in Central Asia.
- 2018: Representing a Chinese metals company in an LME arbitration; in particular, a jurisdiction dispute concerning economic tort claims following interruption to the delivery of precious metals from the DRC.
- 2017-2018: Representing an African oil storage company in anti-suit injunction applications made in an LCIA arbitration arising from a dispute concerning the cancellation of loans.
- 2017-2018: Advising a Middle-Eastern State aluminium company concerning claims following erroneous shutdown of the plant.
- 2017: Advising a Chinese metals company in a dispute concerning the cancellation of a contract for the supply of precious metals following allegations relating to the use of child labour.
- 2017: Representing the purchaser in a claim for an injunction restraining the disposal of copper anodes under production in South America.
- 2015-2017: Representing the contractor in a US$60m dispute board hearing and subsequent ICC arbitration concerning an alleged EPC contract relating to iron ore mining operations in the South Pacific.
- 2016: Representing an African oil company in an LCIA arbitration pursuant to a JOA and PSC. The claims included allegations of shortcomings in deepwater drilling operations conducted offshore West Africa.
- 2016: Representing a Chinese steel producer in an arbitration application concerning an alleged error in an LCIA award relating to coal supply.
- 2016: Advising an insurer in relation to claims arising from Qingdao warehouse losses.
- 2015: Representing a South-East Asian oil refinery in a US$500 million ad hoc arbitration concerning the export of bitumen.
- 2015: Advising a mining company in relation to the termination of a very high value SPA

Offshore construction:

- Alex frequently acts for contractors and owners in disputes concerning the performance and cancellation of contracts for pipelines, offshore structures, semi-submersible drilling rigs, jack up drilling rigs, drill ships and barges. Recent examples have included the following:
- 2025: Representing contractor in relation to dispute arising from offshore windfarm.
- 2022: Advising Chinese shipyard in cancellation dispute concerning newbuild vessel.
- 2022: Advising contractor in relation to dispute arising from offshore windfarm.
- 2019-2022: Representing port owner in dispute concerning development of terminal.
- 2020: Advising purchaser in respect of cancellation of fleet of new builds.

- 2018-2019: Representing South Stream (a Gazprom subsidiary) in ICC arbitration proceedings brought by Italian energy services company Saipem in connection with the termination of an approximately €2 billion contract for the construction of a 900km gas pipeline from Russia to Bulgaria across the Black Sea.
- 2018-2019: Representing a Central Asian state oil company in a dispute concerning the construction of a jack-up drilling rig.
- 2018: Representing a Chinese ship yard in multiple LMAA arbitrations concerning alleged defects in the design of propulsion machinery in a fleet of ships.
- 2018: Representing a US/Norwegian drilling contractor in an LMAA arbitration concerning cancellation of a contract for the construction of a drilling barge.
- 2016: Representing the Greek buyer in an LMAA arbitration concerning the resale of a bulk carrier following the wrongful cancellation of a shipbuilding contract.
- 2016: Representing an Italian shipyard in a professional negligence claim against London solicitors relating to the presentation of a delay case in an LMAA arbitration.
- 2016: Representing the US buyer in a dispute arising out of the termination of a c.US$600m contract for construction of a drill ship due to alleged insolvency of the Yard.
- 2015: Advising a Chinese yard in a dispute concerning the construction of a >US$500m semi-submersible drilling rig.
- 2015: Advising a Chinese yard in a dispute concerning the termination of a c.US$200 contract for the supply of a jack-up drilling rig.
- 2015: Representing the Chinese shipyard in 2-ship cancellation dispute, following rejection of the ships due to their condition on delivery.
- 2014; Representing the European contractor in an LCIA arbitration arising from a final account dispute related to the world's largest offshore construction project (a hook-up project in a CIS country).
- 2014: Advising a European bank in relation to the drawdown of the second tranche of >US$300m funding for the construction of 2 new-build vessels.

Arbitration (As Counsel)

Alex is instructed in a wide range of domestic and international arbitrations including under ICC, LCIA, HKIAC, LMAA, UNCITRAL, DIAC and trade association rules. He also acts on arbitration appeals, applications to set aside awards, challenges to Tribunal jurisdiction and ancillary applications to Court in arbitration matters. He is one of only 5 silks ranked in Chambers & Partners for both International Arbitration: General Commercial and International Arbitration: Construction/Engineering.

Examples of work (excluding the energy/offshore construction arbitrations which form the bulk of Alex's practice and which are referred to above) include:

- 2025: Representing cryptocurrency investor in dispute with exchange.
- 2025: Representing appellant in s.69 hearing on LMAA arbitration.
- 2023-2024: Representing Ruschemalliance in dispute concerning availability of anti-suit injunction in support of Paris arbitration clause
- 2024: Representing owner in arbitration appeal over yacht sale
- 2024: Representing tech manufacturer in high value dispute arising from export controls.
- 2022-2023: Representing former management members in fraud claim under shareholders' agreement
- 2019 - 2022: Representing JV party in respect of very high value dispute as to performance/effect of JV agreements, loan agreements etc in respect of large onshore infrastructure project in CIS
- 2020: Representing seller in >US$2 billion fraud/breach of warranty claim under SPA concerning sale of large European pharmaceutical business
- 2019: Providing advice to shareholders in disagreement as to occurrence of liquidity event under SHA
- 2019: Providing evidence for foreign Court in respect of enforceability of performance security in support of FIDIC contract

- 2018: Representing the main contractor in a US$150m ICC arbitration against a subcontractor concerning defects in the boilers at a Combined Cycle Thermal Plant in the Middle East
- 2017: Representing the Republic of Turkey in an ICC arbitration concerning one of the contracts for the Marmaray Rail Project in Istanbul
- 2016: Representing an insurer in relation to claims arising from Qingdao warehouse losses
- 2016: Representing a Russian company in an LCIA arbitration concerning non-payment under a settlement agreement, involving allegations of cyber attack
- 2015: Representing the employer in a US$120m ICC arbitration concerning the delayed completion of a Combined Cycle Thermal Power Plant in the Middle East
- 2015: Acting for a power company in a dispute concerning the performance of generating equipment at a power plant in South East Asia
- 2014: Representing a UK engineering company in an ad hoc insurance arbitration arising out of a claim to recover punitive damages liability to which it was exposed in the US
- Alex occasionally sits as an arbitrator, but prefers counsel work.

Commercial Litigation

Alex has a wide-ranging commercial practice and is frequently instructed by commercial clients and insurers in major disputes concerning international and domestic business transactions. As noted above, many of these disputes are referred to arbitration. He also, however, appears regularly in the principal divisions of the High Court, in particular the Commercial Court. He has substantial experience of related interlocutory relief such as search orders, freezing injunctions and security for costs.

Examples of work include:

- 2024-2025: Representing music company in dispute over licence agreement.
- 2024: Representing owners of Bahraini company in BVI liquidation application arising from dispute in relation to shareholdings.
- 2023-2024: Representing the developers of Bitcoin in their successful defence of high-profile copyright/database rights claims by Dr Craig Wright and claims for breach of fiduciary duty by Tulip Trading Ltd. The claims were dismissed and discontinued following the judge's determination that Dr Craig Wright was not the pseudonymous Satoshi Nakamoto.
- 2023-2024: Advising in relation to effect of Covid etc on airport concession agreement.
- 2022: Representing purchaser of financial instruments relating to leasing of Airbus A380 aircraft
- 2022: Advising State in relation to consequences of Covid and war in Ukraine on concession agreement
- 2020: Advising in relation to freezing injunctions in support of claims under put-option agreements etc
- 2018: Representing a Peruvian casino owner in a jurisdiction dispute arising out of an alleged online gaming conspiracy.
- 2017: Representing SocGen in applications arising out of attempted service of proceedings in Turkey and related freezing injunctions.
- 2017: Acting for the owner in a dispute concerning payments due in respect of construction of waste-to-energy plant
- Representing the claimant in a dispute relating to dishonest failure to provide security for loans, including subsequent committal proceedings against the defendant and applications for the disclosure of information on assets in the BVI
- 2015-2017: Advising an investment fund in relation to potential claims arising out of the Madoff Ponzi scheme
- 2016: Representing a joint venture party in relation to payments allegedly due following a JV agreement in respect of an oil prospecting licence in West Africa
- 2016: Advising a CIS company in respect of potential claims against a bank following the enforcement of security
- 2015-2016: Representing a Spanish shipyard in a claim by an oil company concerning the resistance of an offshore platform to ship impact

- 2015: Qinetiq Ltd v Cofely Workplace Ltd [2015] EWHC 989 (TCC), representing the claimant in a dispute arising out of accidental damage to drone aircraft
- 2014: Representing telecoms company in relation to fees payable to corporate advisers following the sale of a subsidiary

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What the Directories Say

"He is just very bright and hardworking." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - Energy & Natural Resources)

"I regard him as one of the leading silks in his field. Alexander is a subtle tactician and adept at managing a tribunal towards the right outcome. He has the depth of knowledge to challenge an expert." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - Energy & Natural Resources)

"Alexander is practical, straight talking and can cut through detail very quickly. Clients like him because he is practical and does not bamboozle with legal jargon." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - Energy & Natural Resources)

"Alexander is exceptionally bright, highly responsive and very easy to work with. He gets to the heart of the issue quickly and has excellent judgement as to what really matters." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance)

"Alex was really impressive on an arbitration. He is a very organised and determined advocate. He was extremely impressive and very focused." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance)

"Alexander is very impressive. He is good on his feet; very calm and collected." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance)

"Alexander is regarded as one of the leading silks in his field. He is a subtle tactician and adept at managing a tribunal towards the right outcome. He gets his hands dirty with expert reports, and has the depth of knowledge to challenge an expert." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance)

"Alexander is very good. He is practical, straight-talking and can cut through detail very quickly. Despite being silk, he will do a detailed view and knows the case from the bottom up. Clients like him because he is practical and does not bamboozle with legal jargon." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance)

"He is probably one of my go-to silks nowadays." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - International Arbitration: Construction/Engineering)

"He is a big name in the arbitration world and a super, silk-level barrister." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - International Arbitration: Construction/Engineering)

"Alex is just very bright and hard-working. I think highly of him." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - International Arbitration: Construction/Engineering)

"He has always been very commercial and has a sensible, commercial approach to disputes. He understands what is driving clients and has really good judgement, which not many barristers do." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - International Arbitration: Construction/Engineering)

"Alexander Gunning is excellent at submissions and has a great way of managing and relating to tribunals."

"Alex is a pleasure to work with. He's hardworking, insightful and very user-friendly." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - Commercial Dispute Resolution)

"Alex is a delight to work with. He is superb on his feet and a great strategic thinker." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - Commercial Dispute Resolution)

"Alex is a super silk who is endlessly curious. He is outward-looking, travelling and attending events abroad, thereby absorbing the idiosyncrasies of other cultures and non-English legal systems." (Chambers and Partners 2027 -

Commercial Dispute Resolution)

"Alex is highly knowledgeable and completely dependable. He provides exceptional client service." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - Commercial Dispute Resolution)

"Alex is straight-talking and cuts through issues very quickly, offering a detailed view of the case from top to bottom. Clients like him because he is practical and does not bamboozle them with legal jargon. He is very versatile and can turn his hand to completely different matters with ease." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - Commercial Dispute Resolution)

"Alexander provides really helpful, insightful and knowledgeable contributions." (Chambers and Partners 2027 - Shipping & Commodities)

"He is on top of the details." (Legal 500 2027 - Commercial Litigation)

"Alexander is personable, commercial and always hugely well prepared. A real leader who is excellent in all respects." (Chambers and Partners 2026 - Energy & Natural Resources)

"Alex stands out for really showing judgement and insight out of the norm." (Chambers and Partners 2026 - Energy & Natural Resources)

"There are not enough superlatives to describe Alexander - clients get a great deal of confidence in the way that he delivers advice." (Chambers and Partners 2026 - Energy & Natural Resources)

"Alexander is phenomenally intelligent and has a grasp of detail which is second to none." (Chambers and Partners 2026 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance)

"He is an exceptional advocate with a keen analytical mind, allowing him to break down even the most intricate legal issues with clarity." (Chambers and Partners 2026 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance)

"Alex Gunning is an absolutely first-rate KC. He possesses every quality that the clients dream for the best advocate for the case. On top of that, he is extremely delightful to work with." (Chambers and Partners 2026 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance)

"He is phenomenally intelligent, he has a grasp of detail which is second to none and he is formidable in front of judges." (Chambers and Partners 2026 - Shipping & Commodities)

"Alex is always a reliable source of legal advice and analysis, and is a man of sound judgement. He is also a lovely person to work with – always calm and always on top of his brief." (Chambers and Partners 2026 - Commercial Dispute Resolution)

"Alex is the complete package. He is great on his feet, forensic in cross-examination and a pleasure to work with." (Chambers and Partners 2026 - Commercial Dispute Resolution)

"He was incredibly at one with us as and the client as a team. You couldn't fault his commitment, work ethic, command of the detail and passion for the job." (Chambers and Partners 2026 - Commercial Dispute Resolution)

"An expert in construction disputes." (Legal 500 2025 - Construction, energy and infrastructure)

"Alex has the perfect combination of experience in projects, construction, project finance and arbitration." (Chambers and Partners 2025 -International Arbitration: Construction/Engineering - UK-Bar)

"Alex really throws himself into the deep end of a matter. He's incredibly impressive at getting up to speed." (Chambers and Partners 2025 - International Arbitration: Construction/Engineering - UK-Bar)

"Alexander Gunning is excellent." (Chambers and Partners 2025 -Shipping & Commodities UK-Bar)

"He's into the details, providing excellent advice and overall great client service. He has a deep knowledge of energy disputes, and is someone I'll be sure to instruct time and again." (Chambers and Partners 2025 - Commercial Dispute Resolution - UK-Bar)

"Alex's legal analysis and commercial awareness are both second to none, making him a highly impressive and trusted

adviser." (Chambers and Partners 2025 - Commercial Dispute Resolution - UK-Bar)

"Alex is the whole package, in terms of responsiveness and extreme smarts. He isn't someone who tells clients what they want to hear; he tells them what they need to hear." (Chambers and Partners 2025 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance - UK-Bar)

"Alex is the most efficient KC I've ever worked with. He conducts elegant advocacy, and his advice is consistently of top quality. He is a barrister that I feel lucky to be able to instruct." (Chambers and Partners 2025 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance - UK-Bar)

"Alex is a star of the English Bar, a true leading KC. His knowledge, delivery and accessibility in every respect is first class." (Chambers and Partners 2025 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance - UK-Bar)

"Alexander Gunning is one of the best advocates I have seen. He's ruthless, but in a brilliant and lovely way. Behind the scenes, he's ferociously hard-working." (Chambers and Partners 2025 - International Arbitration: General Commercial & Insurance - UK-Bar)

"Alex has the perfect combination of experience in projects, construction, project finance and arbitration." (Chambers and Partners 2025 - International Arbitration: Construction/Engineering - UK-Bar)

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"Alex's legal analysis and commercial awareness are both second to none, making him a highly impressive and trusted adviser." (Chambers and Partners 2025 - Commercial Dispute Resolution - UK-Bar)

"He is never afraid to roll his sleeves up, has no airs and graces, and works ferociously hard." (Chambers UK 2024 - International Arbitration)

"Alexander is excellent. He understands really big, complex shipping issues and is particularly brilliant in arbitration." (Chambers UK 2024 - Shipping and Commodities)

"A truly admirable advocate. Tremendously hard working and very friendly, he has a remarkable capacity for absorbing a vast amount of information quickly." (Chambers UK 2024 - Commercial Dispute Resolution)

"He is one of the best. He's hard-working, on top of all the details and one of the more deadly opponents.", "He's a clear leader in the area. He's bright, with a good scientific mind." (Chambers Global 2023 - Energy & Natural Resources)

"He's an erudite heavyweight for the really complex cases.", "He has an understated but highly effective approach to advocacy. He has an astonishing ability to grasp the most technical of issues and is delightful to work with.", "He masters detail in a way that very few leading barristers can manage. He is particularly strong at quantum matters." (Chambers Global 2023 – International Arbitration – The English Bar – Global Market Leaders)

"Really pulling away from this peers and just the all round perfect package. Excelling in all areas from client handling, to sound judgement, to smooth advocacy." (Legal 500 2023 – International Arbitration: Counsel)

"Alexander is good at seeing the big picture but he will still do the hard work required to master the details of the brief.", "He is excellent, diligent and hard-working." (Chambers Global 2023 – Shipping and Commodities - UK)

"Alexander is brilliant. He is all over the detail and incredibly user-friendly.", "Alexander is a very diligent and hard-working silk. He is particularly good in complex engineering and construction disputes." (Chambers Global 2023 – Dispute

Resolution: Commercial - UK)

"Alexander Gunning KC is well regarded by peers and solicitors for his effective style of advocacy. He has been involved in a range of energy infrastructure cases, and has acted for contractors in disputes concerning the mining, drilling and transportation of natural resources. Gunning frequently represents clients from Central Asia and China." (Chambers UK Bar 2023 - Energy & Natural Resources)

"Alexander Gunning KC of One Essex Court is highly regarded for his international arbitration practice focusing on matters of construction and energy. He is particularly well known for his expertise in handling disputes regarding the cancellation of construction projects abroad" (Chambers UK Bar 2023 - International Arbitration: Construction/Engineering)

"Alexander Gunning KC of One Essex Court maintains a strong shipping and commodities practice. He has marked expertise in disputes relating to ...the offshore construction of rigs and ships. He has a noted following among Asian clients." Chambers UK Bar 2023 - Shipping & Commodities)

"He is conscientious, always on top of the detail and able to master the most technical expert issues, and his unrelenting logic and mastery of the detail makes him highly effective." (Legal 500 2023 – Energy)

Education and Qualifications

King's College London: 1989-1992: LLB; First Class Honours (Jelf medallist)

1992-1993: LLM (Commercial and Corporate Law)

Inns of Court School of Law: 1993-1994: Outstanding

Admitted to practise in the British Virgin Islands (BVI)

Registered as an advocate in the Dubai International Financial Centre Courts (DIFC)

Memberships

COMBAR (former Chair)
Member of the Inter-Pacific Bar Association (former UK JCM)
Member of LCIA European Users' Council
Supporting member of the LMAA

Awards





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