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Paul Tan

Barrister
Call 2007

Scope of Practice

• Arbitration • Banking and Financial Services • Company and Insolvency • Energy and Natural Resources • Intellectual Property

Overview

Paul Tan specialises in international arbitration (commercial and investor-state), litigation (trials and appeals) and arbitration-related litigation. He regularly leads the advocacy for his clients. Paul was called to the Bar in Singapore in 2007 and to Middle Temple in 2012.

He acts for international corporations, global insurers, banks and financial institutions, funds and governments across a range of industries and concerns, including telecoms, technology and media, natural and renewable resources, and corporate governance.

Paul is regularly acknowledged by major legal publications as a leading lawyer in arbitration and litigation – *"you cannot get anyone better than him"*, *"an absolute star"*, *"a standout and gifted advocate"*, *"runs circles around his opponents"*, *"known for dealing with difficult problems"*, *"a well-regarded advisor in international matters"*, *"a first-rate lawyer in investor-state disputes right through to construction cases"*, and *"has the ear of the tribunal and the client"*, and *"the best candidate you can entrust the most critical cases to."*

Paul has also been appointed an expert on Singapore law and sits as an arbitrator in matters before the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) and the International Chambers of Commerce (ICC). He also has DIFC rights of audience and is on the Panel of Arbitrators of the Hong Kong International Arbitration Center and appears as counsel before the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC).

Paul is the co-author of three books on international arbitration: *Mustill & Boyd: Commercial and Investor-State Arbitration* (LexisNexis, 3rd ed, forthcoming); *A Commentary on the Singapore International Arbitration Act* (Oxford University Press, 2023) and *The Law and Theory of International Commercial Arbitration in Singapore* (Academy Publishing, 2022).

He also holds or has held numerous committee appointments, including as co-chair of the ADR committee of the Law Society of Singapore, the executive committee member of the Rising Arbitrators Initiative, the users' committees of the Singapore International Commercial Court, a member of the ICC Commission for the Belt and Road Initiative and a member of the Thought-Leadership Committee of ICC Singapore, a founding member of the International Law Association (Singapore), co-chair of the Asia-Pacific and Australasian region for the London Court of International

Arbitration's Young International Arbitration Group, the regional co-leader of the Association Suisse de l'Arbitrage (Southeast Asia), and a committee member of Young Singapore International Arbitration Centre.

He is currently appointed by the Ministry of Finance to the Income Tax Review Board (Singapore) and sits on the disciplinary bodies of the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (Singapore) and the Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants.

Prior to joining the independent bar, Paul spent the last decade as partner at one of Singapore's largest firms, headed the Southeast Asia litigation practice for a Magic Circle's foreign law venture in Singapore and led the Asian arbitration practice for a top US firm. He was also formerly a law clerk to three Chief Justices of Singapore.

Paul is able to appear before the Singapore Courts from Paul Tan Law LLC.

Examples of Recent Cases

Energy and Natural Resources

- Advised a State-owned entity in relation to shareholder, financing and breach and termination issues relating to a multi-billion dollar joint venture to build a petrochemical facility. Governed by multiple laws including English law with various agreements providing for LCIA arbitration or English court jurisdiction.
- Acted for a government in relation to US$3bn in tax liabilities concerning a natural gas exploration service contract. Governed by Philippine and international law; ICC rules.
- Acted for a government in relation to US$700m claims under sovereign guarantees with two water concessionaires. Governed by Philippine and international law; UNCITRAL rules, PCA administered.

Sale of Goods and Supply of Goods and Services

- Acted on a US$200m dispute over the sale of oil rigs in four parallel proceedings against the buyer and their guarantor. Governed by English law; LMAA rules.
- Acted on a US$60m dispute arising under parallel 'offshore' and 'onshore' agreements concerning the sale and purchase of logs in Indonesia. Governed by Singapore and Indonesian law; SIAC arbitration.
- Acted for a company in a dispute involving the sale and purchase of encrypted chips in high frequency and very high frequency military radios, involving Australian, Italian, Indonesian and Singapore elements.

Technology, Media, Telecoms and Intellectual Property

- Acting on a dispute involving a video licensing agreement between a US gaming studio and a publisher. Governed by Singapore law; SIAC rules.
- Acted for one of the world's largest content producers and distributors in a dispute with its joint venture partner over the exercise of a put option and the valuation of the company in relation to its multi-billion dollar acquisition. Governed by Singapore law; ICC rules.
- Acted for a Taiwanese manufacturer against a conglomerate in an indemnity claim for breach of intellectual property rights. Governed by Singapore law; SIAC rules.
- Acted for a telecoms company in relation to the termination of tower contracts worth over US$200m, including potential investment claims. Governed by English law; ICC rules.

Company, Shareholder and Joint Venture Disputes

- Acted for a cosmetics company in a dispute with its joint venture partner following an US$800m buy-out by an international brand. Governed by HK law; SIAC rules.
- Acted for a major global Chinese insurer in relation to the exercise of a put option over a major healthcare company in Singapore with US$300m plus running interest. Governed by Singapore law; SIAC rules.
- Acted for shareholders against the directors of a real estate investment trust for breach of duties.
- Acted for a Hong Kong party in a minority oppression suit in relation to an investment in a landmark hotel in Singapore.

Private Equity / Funds and Financial Disputes

- Acted for a leading PE fund in relation to a potential dispute with one of their portfolio companies in the education sector. Governed by Singapore law; SIAC rules.
- Acted for a PE fund in relation to their US$500m investment in the telecommunications sector in an Asian country. Governed by Singapore law; SIC rules.
- Acted for a borrower against a lender for unlawful forfeiture of its collateral in listed shares worth in excess of US$100m, with parallel proceedings in multiple jurisdictions. Governed by Singapore law; SIAC rules.
- Acted for an international bank in relation to potential claims worth $500m arising out of accounts managed by a fraudulent relationship manager.
- Acting for an international bank in relation to a $150m mis-selling claim.
- Acted for an international bank in relation to claims for misrepresentation and negligence as a result of investments affected by the Madoff ponzi scheme.
- Acted for an international insurer against an agency leader for soliciting the movement of 240 agents to a rival business in a claim in excess of $1bn.

International Arbitration & Litigation

- Acted for a Japanese media company in setting-aside proceedings in relation to an $800m dispute over the value of an intellectual property portfolio.
- Acted for a fund in defending an award against allegations of breach of public policy.
- Acted for a BVI entity in setting-aside proceedings for the Tribunal's failure to address a defence / counterclaim.
- Acted for Midea in setting aside an award on the basis it was rendered in excess of jurisdiction / against parties' agreed position.
- Acted for a Chinese construction company in a challenge against an award involving claims and counterclaims of US$1.2bn.
- Acted for the successful party in the first-ever Court of Appeal decision granting an antisuit injunction restraining foreign proceedings.
- Acted for a fund in the enforcement of an award and setting-aside proceedings in the first arbitration-related decision by the SICC.

Public International Law and Investor-State Arbitrations

- *AES Corporation v Kazakhstan*
- *White Industries v India*
- *Courts plc v Madagascar* (prior to filing)
- *Rafat v Indonesia* (annulment stage)
- *Shell v Philippines*
- *Manila Water v Philippines*
- *Maynilad v Philippines*

- *Swissbourgh Diamond Mines v Lesotho* (the first challenge before the Singapore courts against a final award of an investment tribunal. The case also involved novel issues of the application of the State Immunity Act to the service of enforcement orders on foreign States.)
- Other confidential opinions for corporations with potential claims (including for a telecommunications company against a Southeast Asian nation), treaty planning needs (due to a social media ban by an Asian country), the privileges and immunities of international organisations, and potential proceedings under the WTO related to plain packaging legislation.
- Court pleadings involving aspects of public international law, including the enforcement of US federal judgments against a State in England for acts of terror and the immunity of former diplomats.

What the Directories Say

Who's Who Legal (ranked for arbitration, litigation and asset recovery in the Southeast Asia and Global Guides)

- "You cannot get anyone better than him"
- "The best mind in Singapore"
- "Extremely impressive and smart"
- "Brilliant strategist"
- "One of the best lawyers in Singapore and the best candidate whom you can entrust the most critical cases to"
- "Earns plaudits for his leadership in high-value commercial disputes across a range of industries, including telecoms, energy, infrastructure, environment, social and corporate governance."
- "First-rate practice handling high-value disputes in the construction, real estate and energy sectors, among others."
- "Very sharp, easy to work with, grasps issues quickly"
- "A very impressive and exciting lawyer"

Legal 500 (Asia-Pacific)

- "One of the best lawyers in Singapore and the best candidate whom you can entrust the most critical cases to"
- "Incredibly bright"
- "An 'absolute star'
- 'Known outside Asia as a first-rate lawyer' in investor-state disputes right through to construction cases"
- "One of the stars of his generation"
- "Highly intelligent"
- "Knows the arbitration space"
- "Has the ear of the tribunal and clients"
- "Accessible, thoughtful, legally creative while being commercially sensitive"

Chambers & Partners (Ranked for Arbitration and Litigation)

- "As good as anybody I'd worked with in Singapore"
- "Really excellent"
- "Highly intelligent"
- "Very smart and can be relied on for difficult legal analysis"
- "A standout and gifted advocate"
- "Runs circles around his opponents"
- "Ability to think tactically and anticipate the moves of the opposing party."

- “Responsive and a very serious, intellectual lawyer known for dealing with difficult problems“
- “Insightful, astute and commercially aware approach”
- “Forces the other side to rethink their strategy”
- “Combines a thorough approach to legal analysis with practical arbitration know-how”
- “A well-regarded adviser in international matters”

Qualifications and Experience

- Partner, Gibson Dunn (Head of International Arbitration, Asia) (2022-2024)

- Partner, Clifford Chance Asia (Head of Litigation, Southeast Asia) (2020-2022)

- Partner, Rajah & Tann Singapore (2013-2020)

- Admitted to the Singapore bar (2007)

- Law Clerk to the Supreme Court of Singapore (2005-2007)

Education

- LLB, National University of Singapore (First Class Honours)

- BCL, University of Oxford (Distinction)

- Chevening Scholarship

- Harvard Law Club Book Prize

- Shook Lin & Bok Prize

- Blackstone Prize

Publications

- *Mustill and Boyd: Commercial and Investor-State Arbitration* (Lexis Nexis, 3rd ed, 2024)

- *A Commentary on the International Arbitration Act* (Oxford University Press, 2023)

- *The Law and Theory of International Commercial Arbitration in Singapore* (Academy Publishing, 2022)

- *50 Years in the Making: An Empirical Account of the Development of Singapore Law* (Academy Publishing, 2015)

- 35 other writings, including chapters in *Singapore International Arbitration Law and Practice* (2nd ed, LexisNexis, 2018), *Trust Disputes: Issues in National and International Law* (OUP, 2016), *Singapore International Arbitration Law and Practice* (LexisNexis, 2014), articles in *LMCLQ*, *Journal of International Arbitration*, *International Arbitration Law Review*, *Singapore Law Gazette*, *Singapore Academy of Law Journal*, *Global Arbitration Review*, *Kluwer Law Online*, and op-eds in *The Straits Times* and *The Business Times*.

Awards

Chambers TOP RANKED UK Bar 2026 One Essex Court

TOP TIER SET Legal500 UNITED KINGDOM 2026

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