

## Georgina Petrova

YEAR OF CALL: 2011

*"Georgina is incredibly hardworking, diligent and an excellent junior. She is super-smart and certainly one to watch."*

Legal 500 2024

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## Practice Overview

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Georgina undertakes a broad range of commercial work in litigation and arbitration. Before joining chambers, Georgina practised as part of the International Dispute Resolution Group in a leading US law firm. She has represented states, multinational companies and high net-worth individuals in complex, high-value disputes relating to Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Russia and the CIS.

Examples of Georgina's recent court cases include:

- *AutoStore v Ocado*: acting for AutoStore, a Norwegian warehouse robot technology innovator, in a high profile patent infringement dispute with Ocado, which gives rise to (*inter alia*) novel and complex conflict of laws issues in breach of confidence claims (led by Vernon Flynn QC). The High Court trial took place in March and April 2022.
- *Bourlakova v Bourlakov and 12 others*: acting for Loudmila Bourlakova, wife of deceased oligarch Oleg Bourlakov, against her deceased husband's relatives and associates in claims arising from a conspiracy to defraud Mrs Bourlakova and her daughters of their rightful share of the family's assets (led by Helen Davies QC). The claimants successfully defeated multiple challenges to the English Court's jurisdiction. Trower J's judgment is available : [2022] EWHC 1269 (Ch)
- *EnQuest v. BP*: acting for EnQuest, a UK-based petroleum exploration and production company, in a dispute with British Petroleum regarding the operation costs of one of Europe's largest oil terminals (led by Fionn Pilbrow QC). The High Court trial is listed in March 2023.
- *VTB v Sberbank and others*: acting for Sberbank, Russia's largest bank, in a High Court dispute with VTB involving allegations of fraud in the context of the insolvency of one of Russia's largest oil refineries (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and James Willan QC). The dispute gives rise to complex and novel issues of jurisdiction relating to proceedings commenced in support of London-seated arbitration proceedings. Sberbank successfully challenged the

- English Court's jurisdiction. Cockerill J's judgment is available [2021] EWHC 1758 (Comm)
- *Hinduja v Hinduja*: acting for the Hinduja brothers in a multi-billion dollar High Court dispute over the family's assets (led by Lord Goldsmith QC).
  - *The Federal Republic of Nigeria v Royal Dutch Shell plc and others* [2020] EWHC 1315 (Comm): acting for the Shell defendants in multi-billion dollar High Court proceedings commenced by Nigeria and involving allegations of fraud and bribery of senior public officials including four former Nigerian presidents in relation to the grant of a prospecting licence over one of Africa's largest oil deposits (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and James Willan QC). The Shell defendants successfully challenged the English Court's jurisdiction. Butcher J's judgment is available [2020] EWHC 1315 (Comm)
  - *United Company Rusal Plc v Crispian Investments Ltd and Whiteleave Holdings Ltd* [2018] EWHC 2415 (Comm): acting for Vladimir Potanin's company, Whiteleave Holdings, in a multi-billion dollar dispute involving Rusal and Roman Abramovich's company, Crispian, with respect to shares in Norilsk Nickel (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and Daniel Toledano QC).
  - *Investec v Glenalla Properties Ltd and others* [2018] UKPC 7: acting for Robert Tchenguiz and trusts associated with him in nine complex, long-running, conjoined appeals to the Privy Council from the Guernsey Court of Appeal involving issues of trusts law, contract and restitution (led by Lord Goldsmith QC).

Georgina's arbitration practice includes disputes under all major institutional rules and *ad hoc*, as well as related court proceedings in England and abroad. Examples of her recent work in arbitration are listed below. Georgina is also instructed on cases involving the DIFC and the Middle East generally, and she is admitted as a Part II Practitioner before the DIFC Courts.

Georgina graduated from University College London (UCL) and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München with First Class Honours and various academic prizes and scholarships. She completed an LLM (with Distinction) in international commercial law at UCL and since October 2017 has held a Teaching Fellowship in contract law at UCL's Laws Faculty.

Georgina is fluent in Bulgarian and German and has working knowledge of French and Russian.

## Commercial

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Georgina acts and advises in commercial litigation across a wide range of industries and sectors. Her areas of expertise include contract and commercial law, jurisdiction and conflict of laws, arbitration- related court proceedings, and disputes relating to the energy sector (including mining and oil & gas). Examples of Georgina's recent cases court cases include:

- *AutoStore v Ocado*: acting for AutoStore, a Norwegian warehouse robot technology innovator, in a high profile patent infringement dispute with Ocado, which gives rise to (*inter alia*) novel and complex conflict of laws issues in breach of confidence claims (led by Vernon

Flynn QC). The High Court trial took place in March and April 2022.

- *Bourlakova v Bourlakov and 12 others*: acting for Loudmila Bourlakova, wife of deceased oligarch Oleg Bourlakov, against her deceased husband's relatives and associates in claims arising from a conspiracy to defraud Mrs Bourlakova and her daughters of their rightful share of the family's assets (led by Helen Davies QC). The claimants successfully defeated multiple challenges to the English Court's jurisdiction. Trower J's judgment is available [2022] EWHC 1269 (Ch)
- *EnQuest v. BP*: acting for EnQuest, a UK-based petroleum exploration and production company in a dispute with British Petroleum regarding the operation costs of one of Europe's largest oil terminals (led by Fionn Pilbrow QC). The High Court trial is listed in March 2023.
- *VTB v Sberbank and others*: acting for Sberbank, Russia's largest bank, in a High Court dispute with VTB involving allegations of fraud in the context of the insolvency of one of Russia's largest oil refineries (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and James Willan QC). The dispute gives rise to complex and novel issues of jurisdiction relating to proceedings commenced in support of London-seated arbitration proceedings. Sberbank successfully challenged the English Court's jurisdiction. Cockerill J's judgment is available [2021] EWHC 1758 (Comm)
- *Hinduja v Hinduja*: acting for the Hinduja brothers in a multi-billion dollar dispute over the family's assets (led by Lord Goldsmith QC).
- *The Federal Republic of Nigeria v Royal Dutch Shell plc and others* [2020] EWHC 1315 (Comm): acting for the Shell defendants in multi-billion dollar High Court proceedings commenced by Nigeria and involving allegations of fraud and bribery of senior public officials including four former Nigerian presidents in relation to the grant of a prospecting licence over one of Africa's largest oil deposits (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and James Willan QC). The Shell defendants successfully challenged the English Court's jurisdiction. Butcher J's judgment is available [2020] EWHC 1315 (Comm)
- *United Company Rusal Plc v Crispian Investments Ltd and Whiteleave Holdings Ltd* [2018] EWHC 2415 (Comm): acting for Vladimir Potanin's company, Whiteleave, in a five-day High Court trial of a shareholders' dispute involving Rusal and Roman Abramovich's company, Crispian, over shares in Norilsk Nickel, the world's largest producer of palladium and one of the largest producers of nickel, platinum and copper (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and Daniel Toledano QC). The dispute related to the construction of a Right of First Refusal contained in a shareholders' agreement and also involved allegations of conspiracy.
- *Investec v Glenalla Properties Ltd and others* [2018] UKPC 7: acting for Robert Tchenguz and trusts associated with him in nine complex, long-running, conjoined appeals to the Privy Council from the Guernsey Court of Appeal on issues of trusts law, professional negligence, contract and restitution (led by Lord Goldsmith QC).
- Confidential court proceedings in support of London-seated arbitral proceedings between a London-listed mining company and a sovereign state (led by Wendy Miles QC).

## Civil fraud

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Georgina has considerable experience advising and acting in high-value, complex disputes involving fraud allegations. In recent years, a significant part of her instructions has involved preliminary challenges to such claims by way of summary judgment or strike out applications and challenges to the English Court's jurisdiction. Examples of Georgina's recent civil fraud cases include:

- *Bourlakova v Bourlakov and 12 others*: acting for Loudmila Bourlakova, wife of deceased oligarch Oleg Bourlakov, against her deceased husband's relatives and associates in claims arising from a conspiracy to defraud Mrs Bourlakova and her daughters of their rightful share of the family's assets (led by Helen Davies QC). The claimants successfully defeated multiple challenges to the English Court's jurisdiction. Trower J's judgment is available [2022] EWHC 1269 (Ch)
- *VTB v Sberbank and others*: acting for Sberbank, Russia's largest bank, in a High Court dispute with VTB involving allegations of fraud in the context of the insolvency of one of Russia's largest oil refineries (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and James Willan QC). The dispute gives rise to complex and novel issues of jurisdiction relating to proceedings commenced in support of London-seated arbitration proceedings. Sberbank successfully challenged the English Court's jurisdiction. Cockerill J's judgment is available [2021] EWHC 1758 (Comm)
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- *The Federal Republic of Nigeria v Royal Dutch Shell plc and others* [2020] EWHC 1315 (Comm): acting for the Shell defendants in multi-billion dollar High Court proceedings commenced by Nigeria and involving allegations of fraud and bribery of senior public officials including four former Nigerian presidents in relation to the grant of a prospecting licence over one of Africa's largest oil deposits (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and James Willan QC). The Shell defendants successfully challenged the English Court's jurisdiction. Butcher J's judgment is available [2020] EWHC 1315 (Comm)
- *United Company Rusal Plc v Crispian Investments Ltd and Whiteleave Holdings Ltd* [2018] EWHC 2415 (Comm): acting for Vladimir Potanin's company, Whiteleave, in a five-day High Court trial of a shareholders' dispute involving Rusal and Roman Abramovich's company, Crispian, over shares in Norilsk Nickel, the world's largest producer of palladium and one of the largest producers of nickel, platinum and copper (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and Daniel Toledano QC). The dispute related to the construction of a Right of First Refusal contained in a shareholders' agreement and also involved allegations of conspiracy.

## Arbitration

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Georgina's arbitration practice includes disputes under all major institutional rules (including LCIA, ICC, SCC, SIAC, HKIAC and ICSID) and *ad hoc*, as well as related court proceedings in England and

abroad. She has acted for multinational companies and high net-worth individuals, as well as for and against states and state-owned enterprises. Much of her work is multi-jurisdictional, involving parallel proceedings and advising on global strategy.

Georgina has acted in arbitrations under a range of foreign laws, including those of Switzerland, Sweden, Cyprus and Nigeria. For example, Georgina has recently acted:

- for the Russian Federation in a claim brought by a former Yukos Oil subsidiary under the Energy Charter Treaty alleging expropriation and other treaty breaches.
- for a publicly traded mining company in two London-seated UNCITRAL arbitrations against an African state.
- for a publicly traded oil & gas company in a Lagos-seated *ad hoc* arbitration against the Nigerian National Petroleum Company involving a dispute over lifting entitlements and fiscal stabilisation provisions.
- for a Cypriot oil & gas company in a two-week commercial arbitration (and related set-aside proceedings) in Stockholm under the SCC Rules, involving issues of illegality and civil fraud under German, Cypriot and Swedish law.
- for a Middle Eastern sovereign state in an *ad hoc* arbitration against another Middle Eastern sovereign state and state-owned enterprise, involving issues of contract and public international law.

In the context of arbitral proceedings, Georgina has also recently advised:

- a multi-national mining and commodities trading company on a contractual dispute involving allegations of bribery.
- an Africa-based private equity fund on a dispute arising out of the restructuring of an investment in the Ethiopian farming sector.
- an Indian private equity fund on the construction of a suite of agreements relating to a joint venture in the IT sector.

Examples of Georgina's recent arbitration-related court cases include:

- Acting for a Chinese multinational company in enforcement proceedings before the BVI courts (led by Vernon Flynn QC).
- *Bourlakova v Bourlakov and 12 others* [2022] EWHC 1269 (Ch): acting for Loudmila Bourlakova, wife of deceased oligarch Oleg Bourlakov, against her deceased husband's relatives and associates in claims arising from a conspiracy to defraud Mrs Bourlakova and her daughters of their rightful share of the family's assets (led by Helen Davies QC). The Claimants succeeded in defending the English court's jurisdiction over the dispute, including in defeating a challenge based on section 9 of the Arbitration Act 1996, which raised issues as to the scope and effect of foreign law-governed arbitration clauses in the context of multipartite fraud disputes. Trower J's judgment is available [2022] EWHC 1269 (Ch)
- *VTB v Sberbank and others* [2021] EWHC 1758 (Comm): acting for Sberbank, Russia's largest bank, in a High Court dispute with VTB involving allegations of fraud in the context of the

insolvency of one of Russia's largest oil refineries (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and James Willan QC). The dispute gives rise to complex and novel issues of jurisdiction relating to proceedings commenced in support of London-seated arbitrations. Sberbank successfully challenged the English Court's jurisdiction. Cockerill J's judgment is available [2021] EWHC 1758 (Comm)

- The Federal Republic of Nigeria v Royal Dutch Shell plc and others [2020] EWHC 1315 (Comm): acting for the Shell defendants in multi-billion dollar High Court proceedings commenced by Nigeria and involving allegations of fraud and bribery of senior public officials including four former Nigerian presidents in relation to the grant of a prospecting licence over one of Africa's largest oil deposits (led by Lord Goldsmith QC and James Willan QC). The Shell defendants successfully challenged the English Court's jurisdiction. Butcher J's judgment is available [2020] EWHC 1315 (Comm) Georgina also advised Shell in related ICSID proceedings.
- Confidential court proceedings in support of London-seated arbitrations between a London-listed mining company and a sovereign state (led by Wendy Miles QC).

## EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

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2017 – ongoing: Teaching Fellow in Contract Law, University College London

2013: Judicial Assistant to the Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Lloyd at the Court of Appeal (Civil Division)

2012: LLM in International Commercial Law, University College London (Distinction)

2011: Bar Professional Training Course, Kaplan College (Very Competent) completed under the Inner Temple's Princess Royal Scholarship (one of the most prestigious academic scholarships awarded by the Inn)

2010: LLB in Law with German Law, University College London (First Class Honours)

2008 – 2009: Certificate in Rechtswissenschaft (Law), Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München (Equivalent to First Class Honours)

## PUBLICATIONS

Together with S. Rowe, "Halliburton Company v Chubb Bermuda Insurance Ltd: Failure to Disclose but No Bias," *The ICC Dispute Resolution Bulletin* (March, 2021).

## MEMBERSHIPS

COMBAR

LCIA

## LANGUAGES

Fluent: German, and Bulgarian

Proficient: French and Russian

## DIRECTORY QUOTES

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Georgina is incredibly hardworking, diligent and an excellent junior. She is super-smart and certainly one to watch. (Legal 500, 2024)

Georgina is recommended for international arbitration by The Legal 500 UK (2021), with clients describing her as "incredibly driven" and an "excellent" team player.