Nikolai Lazarev



Year of Call: 2010
Email Address: nikolai.lazarev@3pb.co.uk
Telephone: 020 7583 8055

Overview

Nikolai Lazarev specialises in international commercial litigation, arbitration, corporate finance, capital markets and sovereign wealth, offering a broad range of specialist legal and transactional advice. He advises leading enterprises and financial institutions as well as ultra-high-net-worth individuals and family offices on complex, often high-value, multi-jurisdictional and culturally sensitive disputes, projects and transactions, with particular experience in claims arising across the technology, infrastructure and logistics sectors.

His diverse commercial litigation practice encompasses contractual and tortious disputes, joint ventures, partnership and shareholder conflicts as well as matters involving trusts, supply of goods and services, jurisdictional and conflict of laws issues, international crime and civil fraud. He is experienced in worldwide asset tracing and recovery in multi-jurisdictional commercial disputes, urgent procedural applications (including stays of proceedings, anti-suit injunctions and worldwide freezing orders) and the enforcement of foreign judgments and arbitral awards.

Nikolai is an experienced corporate finance and capital markets lawyer (solicitor) who, before joining the Commercial Bar, honed his expertise at a leading global law firm based in the City of London. Nikolai's practice is driven by his clients' priorities and integrates both contentious and corporate advisory work—covering commercial negotiations, dispute prevention, transactional matters and regulatory compliance—across a range of sectors. His areas of expertise include M&A, pre-IPO restructurings, IPOs, rights issues, private placements, follow-on offerings, bond issuances, tailored capital markets strategies and special situations. He is also skilled in advising on pioneering technologies such as blockchain and AI, alongside renewable energy, media, banking, real estate, infrastructure and natural resources. Throughout his career, Nikolai has advised on and coordinated substantial debt and equity capital-raising initiatives across various industries and jurisdictions.

Nikolai is passionate about finding innovative solutions to his clients' complex legal and business challenges. He has extensive experience coordinating and leading multidisciplinary legal and consulting teams worldwide, requiring creative strategic vision and an in-depth understanding of the jurisdictions where cases may be won or lost. In complex cross-border matters, solicitors and clients value Nikolai's astute commercial pragmatism, practical judgement and his appreciation of strategic (and cultural) nuances. He combines technical legal knowledge with lateral thinking to achieve his clients' business objectives. Clients also appreciate his personable nature, responsiveness, versatility and ability to distil complex legal concepts into clear and accessible language.

International Arbitration

Nikolai is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCIArb). He has advised and acted for clients across multiple industries and jurisdictions in matters requiring a high degree of commercial awareness in culturally sensitive environments. He accepts instructions to sit as arbitrator in commercial arbitrations or to act as arbitration counsel in ad hoc and institutional arbitrations (e.g. ICC, LCIA, SCC, SIAC) under the principal arbitral rules.

Selected Experience

- Acting for a co-defendant in a $6bn dispute involving a state-owned Central Asian Bank.
- Advising Kazakh and Chinese state oil firms on the acquisition of one of the largest Kazakh upstream enterprises in a deal valued at $2.6bn.
- Advising a multinational renewable energy enterprise on a $1bn IPO with a private placement and subsequent rights issue.
- Advising the government of Turkey on its sovereign note issuance programme.
- Advising a prominent billionaire investor on the takeover of a leading European football club.
- Advising a leading international bank on a €400m Sukuk issuance.
- Advising an art dealer on the acquisition of several Old Masters, raising complex issues around Nazi-looted art, provenance and title.
- Advising the ex-wife of a prominent billionaire in connection with obtaining (an additional) financial remedy by 're-opening' her foreign divorce under Part III of the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984.
- Advising numerous ultra-high-net-worth individuals worldwide on various 'private client' matters, including wealth management, trusts, taxation, investments and philanthropy.

Public Engagements

A regular public speaker and media commentator, Nikolai often addresses audiences at leading international forums. He is available for interview via his chambers.

Publications

Nikolai has authored articles on corporate governance, international arbitration, human rights and legal ethics that have been published in and cited by prominent legal journals including the International Company and Commercial Law Review, the Journal of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Harvard International Law Journal, Oxford Journal of Legal Studies and the Society of Legal Scholars.

Interests

Nikolai's leisure interests include running (he is known as 'the fastest barrister' and was the winner of the 100m Chariots of Fire Sprint hosted by the Inner Temple to celebrate Harold Abrahams' iconic win at the 1924 Paris Olympics), travelling, hiking, mountain climbing, speed skating as well as the English countryside, oriental ceramics, music and art.

Academic qualifications

- 2001-2004: LLB (Hons) (UCL, London) with First Class in final dissertation
- 2004-2005: LLM (UCL, London) with Distinctions in two final dissertations
- 2006-2007: LPC (BPP Law School, London) with Commendation

Professional qualifications & appointments

- Called to the Bar in 2010 (England & Wales)
- Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCIArb)
- Solicitor (England & Wales)

Professional bodies

- Inner Temple
- Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb); Fellow (FCIArb)

- Commercial Bar Association (COMBAR)
- Technology & Construction Bar Association (TECBAR)
- Chancery Bar Association (ChBA)
- Bar European Group (BEG)
- Law Society of England & Wales
- Law Society (International Division)

Direct Access

Nikolai Lazarev is qualified to accept instructions directly from members of the public, corporations, financial institutions and professional clients under the Direct Access scheme.

Expertise

Commercial

Nikolai Lazarev specialises in international commercial litigation, arbitration, corporate finance, capital markets and sovereign wealth, offering a broad range of specialist legal and transactional advice. He advises leading enterprises and financial institutions as well as ultra-high-net-worth individuals and family offices on complex, often high-value, multi-jurisdictional and culturally sensitive disputes, projects and transactions, with particular experience in claims arising across the technology, infrastructure and logistics sectors.

Nikolai has extensive experience in a broad spectrum of complex cross-border commercial litigation, in particular, including:

- Joint ventures
- Company and partnership disputes
- Contractual disputes
- Misrepresentation
- Civil fraud
- Banking and finance
- Asset tracing and recovery
- Trust and claims against fiduciaries

International Commercial Litigation

- Acting for a co-defendant in a $6bn dispute involving a state-owned Central Asian Bank.
- Acting for a leading German re-insurance company in various re-insurance claims.
- Advising an international entrepreneur in his claim against a trading house in respect of losses arising from FX trading.
- Acting for the owner of a leading Russian supermarket chain in a breach of contract action against former business partners, including advice on obtaining a worldwide freezing order and other interim relief.
- Advising a leading Irish bank in a dishonoured Letter of Credit dispute with an Indian counterparty.

International Arbitration

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Corporate Finance

- Advising Kazakh and Chinese state oil firms on the acquisition of one of the largest Kazakh upstream enterprises in a deal valued at $2.6bn.
- Advising a multinational renewable energy enterprise on a $1bn IPO with a private placement and subsequent rights issue.
- Advising a $1bn+ investor on the takeover of a leading European football club.
- Advising a London-listed Russian mining and exploration company on the acquisition of a major gold mine in South-eastern Russia.
- Advising a London-listed South American petroleum production and development company on fulfilling compliance requirements on the London Stock Exchange.
- Advising a London-listed media technologies corporation on an issuance of loan notes.

Banking & Finance

- Advising a leading international bank on a €400m Sukuk issuance.
- Advising the government of Turkey on its sovereign note issuance programme.
- Advising on a major financing of twenty fixed-wing aircraft for a Middle Eastern airline.
- Advising a leading UK bank on the financing of three fixed-wing aircraft and two Eurocopters.

Art & Artefacts

- Advising an art collector on the sale of a painting by Amedeo Modigliani raising complex aspects of provenance.
- Advising an art investor on the acquisition of a painting by Anthony van Dyck and dealing with issues of attribution and provenance.
- Advising an art dealer on the sale of a famous Andy Warhol artwork.
- Advising an art dealer on the acquisition of several Old Masters, raising complex issues around Nazi-looted art, provenance and title.
- Advising a leading international art gallery in its joint venture with an art collector and artist.

Construction and engineering

Nikolai's legal practice includes litigation, arbitration, advocacy and advisory work in disputes and commercial projects relating to technology, construction, engineering, energy and renewable resources.

- Advising a private consortium on the syndication of a €2.2bn loan for the Elefsina-Korinthos-Patras-Pyrgos-Tsakona toll road, one of Greece's largest infrastructure projects.
- Advising a major Asian electricity distribution company on the restructuring and relocation of assets.
- Advising a major global hotel chain on a real estate portfolio restructuring, including advice on new property development projects.
- Advising a Namibian desalination plant on its decommissioning process and international asset sale.
- Advising a real estate investor on the acquisition of a multimillion-pound London-based commercial real estate portfolio, including units under construction.

Family

Nikolai has extensive experience of representing parties in the full range of financial remedies arising out of the breakdown of relationships between married and unmarried couples. These matters often involve complex international asset tracing and recovery, and working with forensic accountants and detectives in locating and freezing hidden matrimonial assets held through complicated webs of corporate entities, trusts and family members. He is often instructed to represent high-net-worth parties seeking to protect their assets on divorce or separation, which requires emotional sensitivity combined with robust tactical arguments to achieve the client's objectives.

- Advising the wife of a Russian billionaire in respect of her entitlement on divorce, as well as complex aspects relating to matrimonial asset tracing and recovery.
- Advising the common-law wife of a Middle Eastern billionaire and securing a successful multi-million US dollar settlement following his initial refusal to undertake paternity testing to prove his fatherhood of her son.
- Advising a prominent international entrepreneur on protecting his financial interests following aggressive demands made

by his wife during their divorce.

- Advising a wife in a high-profile multimillion-pound divorce settlement following successful tracing and recovery of assets belonging to her husband.
- Advising the ex-wife of a prominent billionaire in connection with obtaining (an additional) financial remedy by `re-opening' her foreign divorce under Part III of the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984.
- Advising numerous prominent clients on complex issues pertaining to pre- and post-nuptial agreements before, during and after divorce.

Crime and Regulatory Crime

Nikolai often represents reputationally-sensitive, high-net-worth individuals (and their family members), company directors and international corporations in domestic and international crime, complex cross-border corporate crime and fraud, corruption, bribery, money laundering, serious financial crime, asset freezing orders and confiscation proceedings.

- Successfully defending (with Iain Morley KC) a foreign client who was charged with murder as a co-defendant and securing his full acquittal while the other co-defendant, represented by another KC, was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.
- Advising a Russian party on procedural issues in a prominent CIS banking criminal fraud litigation.
- Successfully defending a foreign client accused of rape, resulting in all charges against him being dropped without the case going to a full trial.
- Advising an African mining company in a dispute relating to a bribery allegation.

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