



# Nikolai Lazarev

**Year of Call:** 2010

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## Overview

Nikolai Lazarev specialises in international commercial litigation, arbitration, corporate finance, capital markets and sovereign wealth, and provides a broad range of specialist legal and commercial transactional advice. He advises some of the world's largest enterprises and leading financial institutions, as well as ultra-high-net-worth individuals and family offices in complex, often high-value, multi-jurisdictional and culturally sensitive disputes, projects and transactions. Throughout his professional career, Nikolai has advised on, and in many cases coordinated and been instrumental in arranging, capital raises in excess of \$10bn of debt/equity financing across a wide range of sectors in multiple jurisdictions.

His diverse commercial litigation practice includes contractual, tortious, joint-venture, partnership and shareholder disputes, trusts and offshore structures, supply of goods and services, jurisdiction and conflict of laws, international crime and civil fraud (including conspiracy, deceit, bribery, constructive trust and restitution issues), worldwide asset tracing and recovery in multi-jurisdictional commercial and high-value matrimonial cases, urgent procedural applications (including stay of proceedings, anti-suit injunctions, worldwide freezing, search and disclosure orders), enforcement of foreign judgments and arbitral awards.

Nikolai is an experienced corporate finance and capital markets lawyer (solicitor) who, before being called to the Commercial Bar, worked with a leading global London City-based law firm. Driven by his clients' needs, Nikolai's unique legal practice combines traditional contentious and advisory work (including commercial negotiations and dispute prevention) across a wide range of sectors, encompassing industry-shifting and first-to-market emerging technologies, blockchain, AI, renewable energy, corporate finance and capital markets (including M&A, pre-IPO restructurings, IPOs, rights issues, private placements and follow-on offerings of all sizes), media, banking, real estate, infrastructure, natural resources, commodities and taxation.

Nikolai is passionate about seeking innovative solutions to his clients' most challenging legal and business needs. He has experience of coordinating and leading multiple legal and consulting teams worldwide, requiring creative strategic vision and an in-depth understanding of jurisdictions where cases may be won or lost. In complex cross-border matters, solicitors and clients value Nikolai's astute commercial pragmatism, practical judgement, his appreciation of strategic (and cultural) nuances, combining his legal knowledge with the ability to think laterally to achieve his clients' business objectives. Clients also appreciate his personable nature, responsiveness, versatility, attentiveness to their needs and ability to articulate highly complex legal concepts in simple and understandable terms.

### 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. Nikolai 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, ICAC). He acts in arbitrations under the principal arbitral rules, including ICC, LCIA, SCC, SIAC and UNCITRAL.

## Selected Experience

- Advising Kazakh and Chinese state oil firms on the acquisition of one of the largest Kazakh upstream enterprises as part of a \$10bn 'loan for oil' deal.
- Acting for a co-defendant in a \$6bn dispute involving a state-owned Central Asian Bank.
- 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 written articles on international corporate governance, international commercial arbitration, human rights, legal philosophy and bioethics which have been published in leading legal journals, including *International Company and Commercial Law Review* (Sweet & Maxwell) and the *Journal of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators*. Regarded as an authority on a variety of subjects, he is often cited in law books and renowned legal journals, including *Harvard International Law Journal*, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, *Society of Legal Scholars* (Cambridge University Press).

## 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 (CI Arb); Fellow (FCI Arb)
- Commercial Bar Association (COMBAR)
- Technology & Construction Bar Association (TEC BAR)
- 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 has extensive experience in a broad spectrum of complex cross-border commercial litigation, with particular expertise in joint ventures, civil fraud, banking & finance, contractual disputes, commodities, various injunctive relief, asset tracing and recovery, company and partnership (including insolvency), trusts and claims against fiduciaries and trustees, and commercial property disputes.

### 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.
- Advising an Icelandic bank on obtaining freezing injunctions.

### Corporate Finance

- Advising Kazakh and Chinese state oil firms on the acquisition of one of the largest Kazakh upstream enterprises as part of a \$10bn 'loan for oil' deal.
- 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 an art collector and investor in his title dispute with a leading international gallery concerning two semi-precious

stone sculptures.

- Advising a leading international art gallery in its joint venture with an art collector and artist.
- Advising an artist on the recovery of his artworks following a dispute with an international gallery.
- Advising an art investor on the acquisition of a rare Persian carpet and rare blue diamond.

## **Taxation**

- Advising a consortium of leading European banks on tax implications relating to a number of aircraft sale and leaseback arrangements.
- Advising a major international corporation on corporate reorganisation and setting up tax-efficient business structures.
- Advising a Russian zinc producer on taxation aspects relating to its winding-up process.
- Advising various ultra-high-net-worth individuals on setting up tax efficient business- and asset-holding structures.

## **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**

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 QC) 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 QC, 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.