

**Soraya CORM-BAKHOS, FCI Arb  
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Soraya Corm-Bakhos, a French qualified lawyer, is an independent arbitrator based in Dubai. After nearly 20 years' experience in private practice first in Paris and since 2008 in Dubai, she is now fully dedicated to her practice as arbitrator.

Prior to that, Soraya was a Counsel at Watson Farley & Williams (Middle East) LLP and practiced in the Dispute Resolution teams of Baker McKenzie Habib Al Mulla and DWF (Middle East) LLP. Before coming to the UAE, she practised in Paris in the law firm of J.P. Karsenty & Associés where she gained extensive experience advising on all types of civil, commercial and corporate transactions and representing clients before the French Courts in a variety of commercial disputes.

During her career in private practice, she advised and represented clients in all types of international arbitrations seated in Europe and the Middle East under major institutional arbitration rules in relation to a wide variety of industry sectors including energy, transport and infrastructure.

Mrs Corm-Bakhos acts as sole arbitrator, co-arbitrator and chair in numerous arbitrations under the auspices of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC), the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA), the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC-LCIA), the Bahrain Chamber of Dispute Resolution (BCDR), and the Abu Dhabi International Arbitration Centre (arbitrateAD) in disputes mainly related to construction, real estate, sale and purchase agreements, joint venture agreements and general commercial disputes.

Mrs Corm-Bakhos has been recognized by The Legal 500 as *“exceptionally hard working, bright and will go the extra mile to ensure the best possible service for their clients”*. She has also been included in the Legal 500's Arbitration Powerlist: Middle East 2023.

Soraya has been appointed to serve as a member of the ICC Commission on Arbitration and ADR. She is also a member of the LCIA Arab Users' Council. She has authored numerous publications in the field of arbitration and regularly speaks at a variety of arbitration conferences.

**Recent experience as arbitrator**

**DIAC proceedings**

- Chair in a DIAC case seated in Dubai in a commercial real estate dispute arising out of three reservation agreements for residential units and governed by UAE law
- Sole Arbitrator in a DIAC case seated in Dubai in a commercial dispute arising out of a services contract (software) and governed by UAE law
- Co-Arbitrator in a DIAC case seated in Dubai in a commercial real estate dispute governed by UAE law
- Chair in a DIAC case seated in Dubai in a construction dispute arising out of a contract for fit-out works governed by UAE law

- Sole Arbitrator in a DIAC case seated in the Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIFC) in a construction dispute for a project in Sudan governed by UAE law
- Co-arbitrator in a DIAC case seated in Dubai in a construction dispute arising out of a subcontract agreement for the execution of works in relation to a highway project in Qatar governed by the laws of Qatar
- Sole Arbitrator in two DIAC cases seated in Dubai in disputes between the same parties arising out of two sale and purchase agreements for residential units governed by UAE law
- Chair in a DIAC case seated in Dubai in a dispute regarding multiple lease agreements for equipment and construction tools governed by UAE law
- Sole Arbitrator in a DIAC case seated in Dubai in a dispute regarding a sub- contract for vibro-compaction works governed by UAE law
- Chair in a DIAC case seated in Dubai in a dispute regarding a hotel sale and purchase agreement governed by UAE law
- Sole Arbitrator in a DIAC case seated in Abu Dhabi in a dispute regarding a business recruitment services agreement governed by UAE law
- Sole Arbitrator in a DIAC case seated in Dubai in a dispute regarding a commercial leasing agreement governed by UAE law
- Co-Arbitrator in a DIAC case seated in Dubai in a dispute regarding a property sale and purchase agreement governed by UAE law

#### **DIFC-LCIA / LCIA proceedings**

- Sole Arbitrator in an LCIA Case seated in London in a telecommunication dispute regarding a license rental agreement governed by law of Algeria
- Co-Arbitrator in an LCIA case seated in Dubai in a dispute regarding a contract for professional engineering services governed by English law
- Co-arbitrator in a DIFC-LCIA case seated in Dubai in a dispute regarding the termination of a sale and purchase agreement for several hotel apartment units governed by UAE law
- Co-arbitrator in a DIFC-LCIA case seated in DIFC in a dispute regarding a distribution agreement and governed by UAE law

#### **ICC, other institutions and *ad hoc***

- Sole Arbitrator in an *ad hoc* arbitration seated in Dubai in a dispute regarding an aircraft lease agreement governed by UAE law
- Chair in an arbitrateAD case seated in the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) in a dispute regarding a hotel operating and management agreement governed by UAE law
- Sole Arbitrator in an ICC case seated in Dubai in a dispute regarding a warehouse agreement governed by UAE law
- Sole Arbitrator in a BCDR case seated in Bahrain in a joint-venture dispute related to construction works in Bahrain and governed by the laws of the Kingdom of Bahrain
- Sole Arbitrator in an ICC case seated in the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) in a dispute regarding a rental agreement for a crushing plant governed by UAE law

## **Selective experience as counsel**

### ***Construction***

- Representing a Chinese contractor against a subcontractor in a dispute arising out of various settlement and closing agreements regarding the completion of a project in Kuwait (seat in the ADGM; UAE law)
- Representing a Chinese contractor in a multi-million USD construction dispute against the employer arising out of the construction of a shopping mall in the UAE under the DIAC Rules (seat in the DIFC; UAE law)
- Representing a UAE-based subcontractor specialised in fireproofing works in a dispute arising from the performance of a subcontract in relation to the construction of Abu Dhabi Airport Midfield Terminal under the DIFC-LCIA Rules (seat in DIFC; UAE law)
- Representing a US contractor in relation to a multi-million AED construction dispute in relation to works provided for the Dubai Airport expansion project under the ICC Rules (seat in Paris; UAE and French law)
- Representing a US contractor in relation to a multi-million AED construction dispute in relation to works provided for a Dubai-based racecourse (Meydan Racecourse) under the DIAC Rules (seat in Dubai; UAE law)

### ***Oil & Gas, Energy***

- Advising a Korean construction company in relation to various construction claims against the employer in a dispute arising out of an EPC contract for the construction of a power plant in Vietnam
- Representing a UAE based leading provider of subsea services to the oil and gas industry in a dispute arising out of a contract for the provisions of services in connection with a pipeline project in the Gulf of Suez under the CRCICA Rules (seat in Cairo; Egyptian law)
- Representing a Pakistani gas company in a USD 80 million plus dispute arising from the performance of a long-term gas supply agreement under the ICC Rules (seat in Singapore; English law)
- Representing a UAE-based subsidiary of a UK contractor in a \$US 90 million dispute with a UAE-based subcontractor in relation to the construction of an oilfield in Abu Dhabi under the ICC Rules (seat in Abu Dhabi; UAE law)

### ***Project development, real estate and engineering***

- Representing a Bulgarian company in a USD multi-million dispute arising from the sale and purchase of a hotel complex in Greece under the LCIA Rules (seat in London; English law)
- Representing a leading international energy service provider in a dispute arising from the performance of an engineering and project management contract for a biofuels facility to be constructed in the Emirate of Fujairah under the LCIA Rules (seat in London; English law)
- Representing several real estate developers in disputes under the DIAC Rules arising out of contracts for the sale of properties in the Emirate of Dubai (seat in Dubai, UAE law)

### ***Corporate and commercial (including banking & finance and transport)***

- Representing two UAE high-net worth individuals in a dispute arising out of the termination of joint-venture agreement for the establishment of a company to operate various restaurants in the UAE under UAE law (seat in Dubai; UAE law)

- Representing a major US bank in a dispute arising from the sale and purchase of a vessel against a private buyer under the LMAA Rules (seat in London; English law)
- Representing a global aircraft leasing company in a dispute arising from the termination of an Airbus lease agreement because of sanctions against a Russian operator under the LCIA Rules (seat in London; English law)
- Representing a leading Saudi cement manufacturing company in a dispute arising from the performance of a contract for the supply of cement under the LCIA Rules (seat in London; English law)
- Representing a UAE-based investment company in a dispute arising out of the performance of a Murabaha financing agreement under the DIFC-LCIA Rules (seat in Dubai; English law)
- Representing a UAE-based company against a German manufacturer in a dispute arising from the performance of an agreement for the supply and installation of wood cutting equipment and industrial plant under the LCIA Rules (seat in London; English law)
- Representing a world leading IT services provider in a dispute arising from the performance of an IT services agreement in relation to the design, development and installation of a forensic evidence warehouse for Abu Dhabi Police under the ICC Rules (seat in Abu Dhabi; UAE law)
- Representing a UAE-based company in a dispute against a Chinese telecommunication giant in a commercial dispute under the SCC Rules (seat in Stockholm; Swedish law)
- Advising on a multi-billion AED worth international partnership dispute between a Canadian and a Saudi national under the DIAC Rules (seat in Dubai; UAE law)
- Advising a UAE investment advisor in a multi-million US\$ dispute against a Saudi investor under an investment services agreement governed by UAE law in an ad hoc arbitration with seat in Dubai

### **Education/Qualification**

- 2003 Admitted to the Paris Bar
- 2002 Ecole de Formation du Barreau (Paris Bar School)
- 2000 DEA (Master II) Private International Law and International Trade Law, Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas, France (with honors)
- 1999 Maîtrise in Private law, Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas, France (with honors)
- 1998 University College London, European exchange programme, third year of law studies

### **Languages**

Fluent in French (native) English and Arabic (native) and has knowledge of Spanish.

### **Publications**

- “US Court Refuses to Enforce a DIFC-LCIA Arbitration Clause due to Abolishment of the DIFC-LCA Arbitration Clause”, in Kluwer Arbitration Blog, 2 February 2024, available online at <https://arbitrationblog.kluwerarbitration.com/2024/02/02/us-court-refuses-to-enforce-a-difc-lcia-arbitration-clause-due-to-abolishment-of-the-difc-lcia-arbitration-centre/>
- The MENA Leading Arbitrators’ Guide to International Arbitration (ed. together with Dr, Gordon Blanke): authored the chapter on “Recognition, enforcement, and nullification of awards” and co-authored with Prof. Affaki the chapter on “Arbitration in banking and financial disputes”, Juris Publishing 2023

- “Dubai Court of Cassation’s Recent Decision on Enforcement of Foreign Awards”, in Kluwer Arbitration Blog, 3 May 2023, available online at <https://arbitrationblog.kluwerarbitration.com/2023/05/03/dubai-court-of-cassations-recent-decision-on-enforcement-of-foreign-awards/>
- “The signing of arbitral awards under UAE law”, in CIArb UAE Branch Newsletter, November 2022
- “Dubai Decree No. 34 of 2021 and the DIAC 2022 Rules of Arbitration: A New Era for Arbitration in Dubai”, in International Journal of Arab Arbitration, Volume 14 (2002), issue 1, pp. 6-18.
- “Enforcement of UK rulings in the UAE”, in The Oath, Issue 115, September 2022, pp.12-14
- “Recoverability of parties’ costs in DIAC arbitrations. Guidance from 2020 cases on the recoverability of arbitration costs”, in The UAE Arbitration Yearbook 2020, Lexis Nexis, 29 April 2022, pp. 97-100
- DIAC 2022 Rules of Arbitration: A modernised Set of Rules for a New Era”, in Kluwer Arbitration Blog, 21 March 2022, available online at <http://arbitrationblog.kluwerarbitration.com/2022/03/21/diac-2022-rules-of-arbitration-a-modernised-set-of-rules-for-a-new-era/>
- “Recoverability of parties’ costs: a persistent issue in DIAC arbitration”, in CIArb UAE Branch Newsletter, February 2022
- “Dubai boosts its disputes presence with Decree 34”, in New Law Journal, Lexis Nexis, 10 December 2021, pp. 18-19
- “Conflicting Dispute Resolution Clauses in Related Contracts in the UAE: which forum?”, Kluwer Arbitration Blog, 14 October 2021, available online at <http://arbitrationblog.kluwerarbitration.com/2021/10/14/conflicting-dispute-resolution-clauses-in-related-contracts-in-the-uae-which-forum/>
- “Dubai decree changes the dispute resolution landscape” in Thomson Reuters Regulatory Intelligence, 4 October 2021
- “Recent case law under the UAE Federal Arbitration Law”, in CIArb UAE Branch Newsletter/July 2021
- “UAE Federal Arbitration Law: improvements and uncertainties”, in the UAE Arbitration Yearbook 2019, Lexis Nexis, February 2020, pp. 86-90
- "Expedited Enforcement of Foreign Awards: A New Favourable Regime for the Enforcement of Foreign Awards in the UAE", Kluwer Arbitration Blog, 25 May 2019, available online at <http://arbitrationblog.kluwerarbitration.com/2019/05/26/expedited-enforcement-of-foreign-awards-a-new-favourable-regime-for-the-enforcement-of-foreign-awards-in-the-uae/>
- "The UAE Federal Arbitration Law: welcome improvements and remaining uncertainties" in IBA Arbitration Committee e-newsletter, May 2019
- "Joinder of Third Parties: A Welcome Novelty under the UAE Federal Arbitration Law", KluwerArbitration Blog, 15 February 2019, available online at <http://arbitrationblog.kluwerarbitration.com/2019/02/15/joinder-of-third-parties-a-welcome-novelty-under-the-uae-federal-arbitration-law/>
- "The United Arab Emirates" in S. Akhtar and G. Blanke (eds), Dispute Resolution in the Gulf: GCC Approaches and Egyptian Influences, Lexis Nexis, 2018, pp. 13-58 (together with G. Blanke)

- "The Enforcement of International Commercial and Investment Arbitration Awards in the MENA Region" butin Arbitration 2017, Vol. 83, No. 1, pp. 71-81 (together with G. Blanke)
- "The DIFC-LCIA Arbitration Centre" in Getting the Deal Through: Arbitration 2015, pp. 25- 27 (together with G. Blanke)
- "Arbitration in the UAE", Questions & Answers, Legal Insight, Westlaw Gulf, 2015 (together with G. Blanke)
- "Arbitration in the UAE", Practice Note, Legal Insight, Westlaw Gulf, 2015 (together with G. Blanke)
- "Drafting Arbitration Agreements in the UAE", Practice Note, Legal Insight, Westlaw Gulf, 2015 (together with G. Blanke) "United Arab Emirates" in The Baker & McKenzie International Arbitration Yearbook 2014- 2015, Juris, 2015, pp. 419-429 (together with G. Blanke)
- "United Arab Emirates" in Getting the Deal Through: Dispute Resolution 2015, 459-467 (together with G. Blanke)
- "DIAC", in Getting the Deal Through: Arbitration 2014, Vol. 78, No. 4, pp. 36-38 (together with G. Blanke)
- "A Regional Overview: Middle East and Africa" in The International Comparative Legal Guide to: International Arbitration 2014, pp. 411-414 (together with G. Blanke)
- "Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards in the UAE: Practice and Procedure", in BCDR International Arbitration Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, September 2014, pp. 3- 27
- "Enforcement of New York Convention Awards: Are the UAE Courts Coming of Age?" in 78(4) Arbitration 2012, pp 359-365 (together with G. Blanke)

### **Speaking engagements**

- May 2025: Beirut Arbitration Days – Organised by LIAC BBA in Beirut, Lebanon – Arbitrator in Panel 10: Mock Arbitration Proceedings
- April 2025: UAE: 10<sup>th</sup> International Arbitration & ADR Summit – Dubai – Moderator 4<sup>th</sup> Grand Panel: “Energy Charter Treaty, ESG, LNG, Pricing and Compliance: Avoiding Inevitable Disputes and Understanding Changes of Circumstances”
- April 2025: IBA Young Lawyer Training Course: The Fundamentals of International Legal Practice, ADGM, Abu Dhabi – Panel discussion on “Career development – how to succeed in a changing world”
- April 2025: Paris Arbitration Week – Panel discussion hosted by Jus Mondi, Habib Al Mulla & Partners and ArbitrateAD: “Shifting sands: Arbitrators in the Middle East”
- February 2025: DIAC training, Stage 1 – Panel discussion on “Substantive and procedural law applicable to the arbitration”
- January 2025: CIArb UAE Branch & YMG Joint Seminar – Moderator for a panel discussion on “Arbitrating in the MENA: Lessons from Practice”
- January 2025: GAR Live Abu Dhabi – Moderator for the panel discussion on “Disclosures and conflict of interest: trends and challenges”
- November 2024: LCIA Symposium in Riyadh – Panel discussion on market trends and global developments in international arbitration

- May 2024: TBH Sundowner Conversations – Moderator for the panel discussion on “Managing risks and disputes in complex construction projects”
- May 2024: ARBInBRIEF – Live video conversation: “Can’t Pay? Won’t Pay! How to deal with Non-Paying Claimants and Respondents”
- March 2024: Riyadh International Disputes Week - HKA & WFW Co-hosted panel discussion: “Victory in conflict – strategies and tactics for achieving success in complex disputes”
- June 2023: Society of Construction Law (SCL) Gulf Event – Talk on “Renewables Contracting: A Transaction and Disputes Perspective”
- February 2023: GAR Live: Abu Dhabi – GAR Live Debate, debater against the Motion: “This house believes that post-Covid in person main hearings will again become the norm”
- October 2022: ICC UAE & CIArb Joint Event – Investment Arbitration and Energy Projects in the UAE and beyond – Panel 1: “International challenges in Investment Arbitration”
- June 2022: Conference organised by Al Tamimi & Co. and ALG International Lawyers “The Culture of International Arbitration: Lessons from Practice” – Panel 2: “Lessons from practice: Beyond the Civil-Common Law divide”
- February 2022: GAR Live: Abu Dhabi – lead moderator for the GAR Live Debate – Motion: “This house believes that Decree 34 will promote arbitration in Dubai, the UAE and the region”
- January 2022: 11th World Litigation Forum 2022 Dubai: 2022 and Beyond: A new Era for Dispute Resolution? – Panel discussion: “Recent developments in international arbitration”
- November 2021: WFW and Horizons & Co joint seminar (part of Dubai Arbitration Week) – “Navigating the current challenges of arbitration in the UAE” – Panel discussion
- November 2019: DWF Breakfast Seminar (part of Dubai Arbitration Week) - "Practical insight and tips for ensuring effective third-party funding of arbitration in the UAE" – Panel discussion
- October 2019: ICC Institute of Advance Training – Drafting Enforceable Awards – ADGM Abu Dhabi – Panel 2: "Spotlight on specific issues: Jurisdiction and Applicable Law"
- March 2019: DIAC 40 – Young Practitioners Group 5th Interactive Workshop – Practical Aspects in Arbitration – Workshop hosted by the Dubai International Arbitration Centre
- March 2018: DIFC-LCIA Breakfast Seminar – Arbitration in the UAE: Onshore or offshore: The debate – Seminar co-hosted by DWF and the DIFC-LCIA
- December 2016: Young ICCA Workshop – Skeleton Arguments and Hearing Preparation – Panel 1: "Drafting persuasive skeleton arguments" – Workshop hosted by Young ICCA and the DIFC-LCIA
- December 2015: International Legal Dialogue Middle East and North Africa Conference, Amman, Jordan – American Society of International Law, Columbia Law School – Session 1: "Arbitration in the Arab World", Recognition and enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards in the Arab World
- May 2015: "Litigate or arbitrate in the UAE? How to design a successful dispute resolution strategy for commercial disputes?" – Corporate Breakfast Briefing hosted by Baker & McKenzie.Habib Al Mulla, Dubai
- January 2015: "Staying out of Court: Avoiding litigation in M&A - Drafting effective governing law and dispute resolution clauses" – Seminar hosted by the Association of Corporate Counsel Middle East, Dubai

### **Memberships, appointments and panels**

- Fellow member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators London (FCIArb)
- Committee Member, CIArb UAE Branch
- Member of the LCIA Arab Users' Council
- Member of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Global Commission on Arbitration and ADR
- ICC UAE
- ICC Lebanon
- ArbitralWomen
- Saudi Center for Commercial Arbitration (SCCA)
- Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC)
- Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA)
- ArbitrateAD
- ADGM Arbitration Centre Arbitrators Panel