



Karim A. A. Khan KC

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Karim Khan KC specialises in all areas of public international law, international criminal and human rights law, sports law, international arbitration, extradition, media law and major commercial fraud cases.

He has acted for both states and individuals and victim groups. He previously worked as a Senior Crown Prosecutor, at the Law Commission of England & Wales, and in the Office of the Prosecutor at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

In 2018 the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, appointed Karim as the First Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Team investigating international crimes committed by ISIL / Da'esh i (UNITAD). UNITAD was established by way of unanimous Security Council Resolution 2379 (2017).

On 16 June 2021 Karim Khan was sworn in for a nine year term as Chief Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Karim succeeds Gambian Judge Fatou Bensouda.

No emails or communications to Karim as ICC Prosecutor should be sent to chambers or to his chambers email address. Any ICC related emails should be sent to the Office of the Prosecutor (office.oftheprosecutor@icc-cpi.int). Karim will not be responding to any sent via Chambers / his Chambers' email. Karim is also not able to accept private or other instructions during his term as ICC Prosecutor.

Expertise

International Law

International Court of Justice (ICJ)

In 2003 Karim was instructed to provide legal advice in the ICJ matter of Liberia v Sierra Leone (concerning the arrest warrant against Charles Ghankay Taylor, Former President of Liberia).



In 2015, Karim was instructed by the Government of Kenya in the ongoing ICJ case of Somalia v Kenya (maritime delimitation in the Indian ocean).

International Prosecution: United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR).

From 1997-2000, Karim was a Legal Advisor in the Office of the Prosecutor in the United Nations International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR).

International Defence

International Criminal Court (ICC)

Kenya

Karim is currently instructed as Lead Defence Counsel to the Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. William Ruto, who faces charges before the International Criminal Court (ICC) relating to the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007-2008. Karim leads a team of fifteen, including five international counsel (including another Queen's counsel), five junior lawyers (international and local) and case management and support staff.

In January 2011, Karim was instructed as Lead Counsel to represent Ambassador Francis K. Muthaura, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Public Service of Kenya before the ICC in relation to the post-election violence in 2007-2008. Karim led a team of fifteen including senior international and Kenyan lawyers, investigators, analysts and case managers. After much litigation, all charges were withdrawn by the Prosecution on the eve of trial in March 2013. This was the first time the Prosecutor of the ICC has withdrawn charges in a case confirmed.

Democratic Republic of Congo / Central Africa Republic

In November 2008, Karim was appointed co-lead counsel in one of the first cases before the ICC, Prosecutor v Jean Pierre Bemba Gombo (Former Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of Congo for crimes allegedly committed in the Central African Republic). Karim acted at the confirmation stage of proceedings which saw the prosecution fail in its bid to prefer charges under Article 25 of the Rome Statute. Instead, the Pre-Trial Chamber confirmed charges under a command theory of responsibility (Article 28).

Sudan

Between 2008 – 2010, Karim was engaged as Lead Counsel before the ICC representing the Sudanese rebel leader, Bahar Idriss Abu Garda, the first ICC suspect to voluntarily surrender to the jurisdiction of the Court. The charges related to an alleged attack on a military garrison at Haskanita in Darfur which was manned by AU personnel, alleged to be peacekeepers. After a contested confirmation hearing, where viva voce evidence was heard, the Defence successfully argued that no charges should be confirmed. This was the first time a case had failed to be confirmed at the ICC. The Prosecution application for leave to appeal the non-confirmation of charges was dismissed.

In March 2010, Karim was also instructed before the ICC for two additional Dafuri rebels, Abdallah Banda and Saleh Jerbo, who voluntarily appeared before the Court in June 2010.

International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY)

In 2003, Karim was appointed defence counsel in the ICTY case of Prosecutor v Limaj charged with crimes against humanity. Limaj was the first commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) tried by the ICTY.



Limaj was acquitted on all counts after full trial and, on his return to Kosovo, proceeded to be elected to the Kosovo Assembly and be appointed Minister for Transport and Communication. The subsequent prosecution appeal against the acquittals was dismissed in Nov. 2005.

In 2004, the Registry of the ICTY also appointed Karim Independent Counsel to the Former Chief of the Bosnia armed forces in the case of Prosecutor v (General) Sefer Halilovic (Halilovic Appeal to President of ICTY allowed).

Karim additionally acts as Defence counsel in appeal proceedings (and previously at trial) in Prosecutor v Prlic et al. (for accused Bruno Stojic) before the ICTY. The Prlic et al case was the longest and most voluminous ICTY case and involved 6 co-accused charged with crimes against humanity.

In May 2008, Karim was instructed to represent the Minister of Culture of Kosovo (Prosecutor v Haraqija) charged with contempt before the ICTY in relation to allegations of witness intimidation. (Astrid Haraqija was acquitted on all counts on appeal).

In December 2008, Karim was appointed lead counsel to Florence Hartmann, the Former Le Monde journalist and Former Chief spokesperson to Carla del Ponte, the Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY and ICTR. Ms Hartmann is the first (and only) staff member of the ICTY or ICTR charged with contempt of court.

Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL)

In 2004, Karim acted as Defence counsel in the Case of Prosecutor v Alex Brima before the Special Court of Sierra Leone (SCSL).

Between April 2006 – June 2007 he was Lead Defence counsel in Prosecutor v Charles Ghankay Taylor before the SCSL. In this capacity, Karim led a team of 5 other lawyers (including legal assistants) investigating crimes in Sierra Leone. The nature of this case required Karim, with the help of the SCSL Defence office, to set up offices in the Hague, Freetown and Monrovia in order to create a platform for effective investigations.

United Nations Transitional Authority for East Timor (UNTAET)

In 2001, Karim was instructed as lead defence counsel before the Special Panel for Serious Crimes in East Timor whilst it was under United Nations administration (UNTAET). In this capacity he represented Cancio Lopez de Carvalho, head of the Mahidi Militia in relation to allegations arising out of the 1999 post referendum violence. Numerous missions to Dili in East Timor and Kupang (West Timor / Indonesia) and high level discussions at heads of state and senior United Nations level conducted.

Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL)

Karim also acts as Lead Defence Counsel to Al Jadeed TV and Ms. Karma Khayat in relation to charges of contempt of court before the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL). This case represents the first time that a corporation has been charged before an international criminal or hybrid court. Karim led a team of two senior international lawyers (including another Queen's counsel) and two other lawyers. After full trial Al Jaded television was acquitted in 2015 on all counts. Ms. Karma Khayat was also acquitted on the most serious count and a fine imposed in relation to the remaining (lesser) offence. On 8 March 2016, the Appeals Panel of the STL dismissed the Prosecution appeal and upheld the acquittals for Al Jaded. In addition, the one conviction entered against Karma Khayat at trial was overturned and substituted with a verdict of "not guilty". The complete acquittals on all counts, for both accused, represents the first completed trial and appeal heard by the STL.

Libya

Karim is also instructed as international counsel representing the former Prime Minister of Libya, Dr. Baghdadi Al-Mahmoudi, who is charged before the courts of Libya with various offenses. Dr. Baghdadi was the Prime Minister of Libya during the regime of Col. Gaddafi. Karim has visited Tunisia and visited the client whilst he was detained in Tunisia with a view to providing legal advice. After extradition to Libya, a mission was also conducted to Tripoli, Libya in a bid to get access to the client.

European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX)

Between 2010 and 2012, Karim was appointed Lead Counsel to Fatmir Limaj in relation to charges of war crimes allegedly committed in Kosovo in 1999 before the EULEX (hybrid) court system in a trial comprising UK, American and Kosovan judges. At the end of this trial, Fatmir Limaj was acquitted on all counts of war crimes on 2 April 2012. The Supreme Court of Kosovo ordered a re-trial and Karim acted as lead counsel in that case as well which ended, for the second time, in a full acquittal on all counts. Karim also advised in relation to allegations of corruption in public office in relation to a separate case before EULEX.

Victims Representation

Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC)

In 2009, Karim was instructed as lead counsel to the largest group of civil parties (victims) in the first case before the Extraordinary Courts of the Chambers of Cambodia (Prosecutor v Kaing Geuk Eav, alias Duch). Karim led an international team comprising Swiss, French, American and Cambodia lawyers. Duch was successfully prosecuted and Karim acted as Lead Counsel for the victims in the appeal that followed.

Cham community of Albania

Karim also leads a team, instructed by the Cham and Albanian communities in Albania, in relation to remedies under the European Convention on Human Rights and other international instruments with regards to their expulsion from Greece at the end of World War Two, and the expropriation of property and denial of rights which followed.

NGO's

Karim is the Founding Director of the Global Victims Initiative (June 2012), which aims to provide redress and advice to victims of international crimes throughout the globe.

Karim is also a Founder Director of the Peace and Justice Initiative (Hague-based NGO focused on effective implementation of the ICC Rome Statute at the national level).

Sports law

Karim has been legal adviser to the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) and, in this capacity, has redrafted the constitution of the AHF in accordance with IOC standards. He has attended AHF meetings in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Myanmar, Colombo (Sri Lanka) and has attended the FIH Headquarters in Lausanne (Switzerland) on numerous occasions for the purposes of giving advice.

Appointments

- Bencher of Lincoln's Inn
- Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitration

- Recorder of the Crown Court
- Fellow of the Singapore Institute of Arbitrators
- Visiting Professor of international law and Human Rights at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone
- Honorary Lecturer, International Law, School of Law, University of Utrecht (2010-2011; 2012-2013)
- Member of the CBA's working group on the ICC Act 2001
- Past member of international justice sub-committee of the IRC of the Bar Council
- Member of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Pro Bono Human Rights Panel
- Included on Attorney-General's panel of Prosecution Advocates (2001-2004)
- Elected an individual member of the International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC) (2008)
- Member of the Executive Committee, Association of Defence Counsel of the ICTY (ADC) (2010-2011)
- Member of Disciplinary Council of the Association of Defence Counsel of the ICTY (ADC) (2007-2010)
- Past Chair, Amicus Committee, of the ADC
- Member of the ICTY Disciplinary Board (along with ICTY judiciary) (2009-2013)
- Elected to the Disciplinary Appeals Board of the ICC (2010) (along with ICC judiciary 2012-2015)
- President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) (2017-)

Awards

- Diploma in International Arbitration, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators

Education

- Barrister, Lincoln's Inn, London
- LLB (Hons), AKC, King's College, University of London
- Inns of Court School of Law, London
- Dip.Int.Rel (Nice), Advanced Diploma, International Human Rights (Abo Akademi, Turku, Finland)
- D Phil (candidate), Wolfson College, University of Oxford
- Doctorate, honoris causa, University College FAMA, Pristina, Kosovo (2012)
- Doctorate, honoris causa, European University, Tirana, Albania

Memberships

Included on Defence counsel list (and list of victims counsel as applicable):

- ICC
- ICTY
- ICTR
- SCSL
- ECCC
- STL