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Aarta Alkarimi

Chartered Arbitrator · FCIArb (Arn. & Med.) · International Arbitrator
LL.M. · New York Licensed Attorney

Founding Partner, Chrysalis International



ADDRESS: Chrysalis International, PO Box 936484, Dubai, UAE
EMAIL: alkarimi@chrysalis-llp.com
PHONE: +971 50 313 1493
WEB: www.chrysalis-adr.com · www.chrysalis-llp.com

Aarta Alkarimi is a Chartered Arbitrator and accredited mediator specializing in complex construction, infrastructure, energy and commercial disputes. With more than 60 arbitrations across multiple jurisdictions and institutions, she has served as sole arbitrator, tribunal chair and co-arbitrator. Her work draws on extensive prior experience as counsel on major international projects and disputes.

Her practice encompasses delay and disruption, technical issues, scope and variations, expert evidence, valuation, quantum and complex contractual frameworks.

Aarta currently serves as Co-Chair of the International Construction Projects Committee of the International Bar Association (2026–2027).

NATIONALITY: British

Credentials & Professional Standing

ADMISSIONS & ACCREDITATIONS

- New York State Bar (since 2002)
- US Federal District Court, Southern District of New York (since 2005)
- Supreme Court of the United States (since 2008)
- Fellow of CIArb in Arbitration and Mediation
- Chartered Arbitrator (C.Arb)
- CIArb Accredited Mediator
- DIFC Courts, Part II Legal Practitioner (2015–2018)
- ICSID Training on Investment Arbitration

LEADERSHIP & COMMITTEES

- Co-Chair, IBA International Construction Projects Committee (2026–2027)
- Vice-Chair, IBA International Construction Projects Committee (2024–2025)
- Commission Member (UAE), ICC Global Commission on Arbitration and ADR (2024–2027)
- Board Member, CIArb Dubai Branch (2023–present)
- Senior Diversity Officer (Economic Empowerment), IBA (2020-present)
- Steering Committee, International Construction Arbitrators Association (ICAA)

ARBITRAL EMPANELMENTS

- Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb) - Presidential Panel
- American Arbitration Association, International Center for Dispute Resolution (AAA / ICDR)
- London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA)
- Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC)
- Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC)
- Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC)
- Abu Dhabi Arbitration Centre (arbitrateAD)

- Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM)
- Vienna International Arbitration Centre (VIAC)
- Korean Commercial Arbitration Board (KCAB)
- Asia Pacific Maritime Arbitration Centre
- Saudi Center for Commercial Arbitration (SCCA)
- Maldives International Arbitration Centre (MIAC)
- Asian International Arbitration Centre (AIAC)
- Tashkent International Arbitration Centre (TIAC)
- Russian Arbitration Centre (RAC)

RECOGNITION

- Thought Leader, Construction – Who's Who Legal / Lexology Index (2024-2026)
- Recommended, Construction – Who's Who Legal / Lexology Index (2014-2019 and 2022-2023)
- Recommended, Arbitration – Who's Who Legal / Lexology Index (2026)
- Arbitrator of the Year — LexisNexis Middle East (2024)
- Mediator of the Year — Lawyer Monthly ADR Awards, UAE (2023)
- Top 5 Most Appointed Female Arbitrators Worldwide in Construction Arbitration — Jus Mundi (2023)
- Arbitration Practitioner of the Month — Jus Mundi (September 2022)

EDUCATION

- LL.M., International Business and Trade Law — Fordham University School of Law, New York
- LL.B. — Tehran University
- Diploma in International Commercial Arbitration — CIArb, Oxford

LANGUAGES

- English and Persian (fluent / native); Arabic and French (basic knowledge)

Positions

CURRENT

- Founding Partner / Independent Arbitrator – Chrysalis International (2016 – present)
- International Bar Association, U.K. (IBA):
  - Co-Chair – International Construction Projects Committee (2026 - 2027)
  - Officer / Council Member, Diversity & International Council (2021 – present)
- Commission Member (United Arab Emirates) – ICC's Global Commission on Arbitration and ADR (2024 – 2027)
- Board Member – Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, UK (CiArb), Dubai Branch (2023 – present)
- Steering Committee Member – International Construction Arbitrators Association (ICAA)

PRIOR

- International Bar Association, U.K. (IBA):
  - Vice-Chair – International Construction Projects Committee (2024 – 2025)
  - Senior Diversity & Inclusion Officer, International Projects Committee (2019 – 2020)
  - Co-Chair, Sub-Committee on International Construction Projects (2018 – 2020)
  - Co-Vice Chair, Sub-Committee on International Construction Projects (2016 – 2018)
- Senior Counsel – Nabarro (Middle East) LLP; Dubai, UAE (2014 – 2016)
- Counsel – Chadbourne & Park; Dubai, UAE (2012 – 2014)
- Senior Associate – Squire Patton Boggs; Abu Dhabi, UAE and Doha, Qatar (2008 – 2012)

- Associate – Peckar & Abramson PC; New York, USA (2003 – 2008)

Representative Case History (Arbitration & Mediation)

Non-exhaustive summaries of neutral appointments and prior counsel matters. Case-specific information is limited by confidentiality obligations.

PRESIDING ARBITRATOR (CHAIR)

- **DIAC** — Dispute arising out of a loan agreement (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **OAC** — Dispute in relation to various claims arising from the termination of a long-term district cooling services agreement (seat and governing law: Muscat, Oman)
- **AIAC** — Construction dispute concerning an energy facility (seat: Kuala Lumpur, governing law: England & Wales)
- **DIAC** — Dispute concerning profit-sharing in connection with a luxury hotel development on Palm Jumeirah, Dubai (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **Kuwait Commercial Arbitration Centre** — Dispute concerning Area Development and Franchise Agreements (seat: Dubai, governing law: Kuwait)
- **DIAC** — dispute is relation to a franchising agreement between UAE and Saudi parties (seat: DIFC, governing law: Dubai)
- **QICCA** — Multi-party construction dispute (seat and governing law: Qatar)
- **ICC** — Multi-party construction dispute (seat and governing law: Qatar)
- **DIAC** — Construction and fit-out dispute concerning a hospital project (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **DIAC** — Construction dispute concerning termination and descoping of façade / curtain wall works across 17 towers in the UAE including design defects and variation claims (seat: Dubai, governing law: UAE)
- **DIAC** — Real estate dispute concerning late handover, design defects, and related contractual breaches (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **DIAC** – Dispute in relation to alleged unpaid certified sums and claims for delay, disruption, prolongation costs, design defects, interest, and costs arising from construction of a luxury residential villa (seat: DIFC, governing law: Dubai)

SOLE ARBITRATOR

- **Ad Hoc (AIAC appointing authority)** — Dispute between vessel owner and charterer concerning the late and defective return of a vessel (seat: London, governing law: England & Wales)
- **DIAC** — Construction dispute between a joint venture and its subcontractors (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **ArbitrateAD** — Dispute between a building owner and service provider concerning a building maintenance agreement (seat: Abu Dhabi, governing law: UAE)
- **SIAC** — Two disputes concerning sale and shipping of construction materials (seat: Singapore, governing law: England & Wales)
- **AAA-ICDR** — Commercial dispute arising from the sale of products through a major US online platform (seat: New York, governing law: State of Washington, USA)
- **SIAC** — two distinct disputes between Indian and Singaporean parties in relation to shipping and sale of agricultural commodities (seat and governing law: Singapore)
- **ICC (jointly nominated by parties)** — Construction dispute concerning two major electrical substations, including termination, variations, bonds, retention and final account issues (seat: Dubai, governing law: UAE)
- **ICC** — Shareholder dispute concerning the acquisition of a mining company (seat: Istanbul, governing law: Iran)
- **ICC** — Dispute in relation to possible breach of warranties regarding purchase of a cloud kitchen (seat: Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), governing law: England and Wales)
- **DIAC** — Dispute arising out of a value-engineering contract with respect to a large development in Abu Dhabi (seat: DIFC, governing law: UAE)
- **DIAC** — Construction dispute in relation to a high-rise commercial building in Dubai (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **DIAC** — Construction dispute involving encashment of advance payment guarantee, termination of contractor, and allegations of fraud (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **DIAC** — Construction dispute regarding construction of internal road systems of a large development in UAE (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **LCIA** — Intellectual property and shareholder dispute (seat: Dubai, governing law: DIFC)
- **DIAC** — Shareholder's dispute related to the sale of an advertising agency (seat and governing law: Dubai)

- **DIAC** — Real estate dispute regarding the sale and late delivery of two identical units in a high-rise building in Dubai (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **DIAC** — Real estate-related dispute regarding late handover of a luxury villa project in Dubai (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **DIAC** — Real estate-related dispute regarding the sale of an apartment unit (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **DIAC** — Real estate dispute regarding payment of property registration fees, service charges and handover date for significant development plot (seat and governing law: Dubai).
- **CIArb Presidential Panel Appointment / CIArb Rules** — Dispute concerning recovery of consultancy fees (seat: London, governing law: England & Wales)

CO-ARBITRATOR / TRIBUNAL MEMBER

- **ICC (appointed by the Court)** — Dispute between an employer and contractor in relation to an energy facility in Iraq (seat: Singapore, governing law: England and Wales)
- **OAC** — Dispute between an employer and contractor in relation to a large residential and mixed-use community (seat: Muscat, governing law: Oman)
- **Institutional Appointment** — High-value construction dispute concerning an airport project in the MENA region (seat and governing law: confidential)
- **LCIA** — Construction of a compressor station and related infrastructure (seat: London, governing law: Oman)
- **Arbitrate AD** — dispute in relation to development of properties under an option agreement (seat: ADGM, governing law: ADGM or Abu Dhabi – Parties' applications are under consideration)
- **LCIA** — Dispute related to dredging (seat: Doha, governing law: Qatar)
- **LCIA** — Construction dispute in relation to cladding and fireproofing of several high-rise buildings (seat: QFC, governing law: Qatar)
- **ICC** — Dispute concerning catering services for an international sporting event (seat: Doha, governing law: Qatar)
- **DIAC** — Dispute concerning construction of a major highway (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **DIAC** — Construction dispute in relation to a commercial tower in Dubai Marina (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **DIAC** — Commercial agency / consultancy agreement dispute with respect to a chain of hospitals in the Middle East (seat and governing law: Abu Dhabi)
- **DIAC** — Dispute in relation to the construction of a waterway system (seat: Dubai, governing law: Qatar)
- **DIAC** — Construction dispute in relation a commercial tower (seat and governing law: Dubai)
- **Ad Hoc** — Arbitration in relation to a shareholder's dispute (seat and governing law: DIFC)
- **ADCCAC** — Potential breach of a high-value supply agreement for a strategic project in Abu Dhabi (seat and governing law: Abu Dhabi)
- **ADCCAC** — Dispute in relation to 10 separate supply orders with identical parties and arbitration clauses in relation to 3 construction projects (seat and governing law: Abu Dhabi)
- **ADCCAC** — Dispute in relation to construction of a high-rise tower (seat: Abu Dhabi, governing law: UAE)

MEDIATION

- Aarta also accepts appointments as a mediator and has acted as mediator or party representative in complex commercial and construction disputes, including matters involving major airport and infrastructure projects.

  Strict confidentiality obligations prevent disclosure of many mediation matters.

Prior Matters as Counsel

CONSTRUCTION

- Represented UAE contractor in a DIFC / LCIA arbitration against a Saudi owner for a re-measurable contract involving a mixed-use facility in the UAE. Claims exceed USD 136 million for wrongful termination, unpaid variations, and unpaid certified payments, with counterclaims of AED 600 million for design defects and progress delays / liquidated damages.
- Represented contractor in a DIAC arbitration exceeding USD 23 million in claims in relation to the construction of an iconic high-rise in Dubai.
- Advised employer on legal aspects of managing a contract for construction of a hotel operated by the Marriott Group in Dubai.

- Represented large Qatari owner / developer in relation to claims exceeding USD 100 million related to construction of a golf resort in Morocco.
- Represented developer in a DIAC arbitration related to a mixed-use facility in Dubai with a delay claim exceeding USD 57 million.
- Represented Family Office in a DIAC arbitration arising from construction of a luxury villa on Palm Jumeirah. Dispute involved delay and design defects with a value of USD 28.6 million.
- Performed due diligence, contract reviews, and advised client on claims arising from construction of a large housing development in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- Advised Saudi Arabian contractor on construction of one of Saudi Arabia's largest university campuses and surrounding mixed-use facilities in Jeddah, including day-to-day advice on contractual obligations, dispute avoidance, and preparation of delay and direct cost claims for formal dispute resolution.
- Advised and represented an education entity in arbitration against the Engineer for construction of its campus in Dubai.
- Advised Australian / UAE general contractor on claims related to extension of time, valuation of works, and injunction of project bonds for a hospitality and multi-family residential project.

AIRPORTS

- Advised a South Asian government regarding termination of the main contractor for its major airport.
- Part of the team that represented a MENA region government's steering committee in one of the largest strategic projects in the GCC. Provided strategic advice on schedule overruns, variation orders, design defect claims, renegotiation, and descoping of project management and EPC contracts related to construction of a passenger terminal and maintenance hangar. terminal at a major airport on the East Coast of the United States.
- Participated in mediation of several large claims related to construction of a regional international airport's maintenance hangars.
- Represented owner / investor in matters related to construction of Queen Alia Airport in Amman, Jordan.
- Represented owner / developer in a USD 70 million design defect claim in relation to an international terminal at a major airport on the East Coast of the United States.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- As co-counsel, represented a regional solar company / claimant in an LCIA arbitration seated in London against a French company for construction of a 40-megawatt solar project in the Middle East.
- Advised a contractor on claims related to construction of compressor stations on the Turkish section of a significant trans-national pipeline project, with claims exceeding USD 8 billion.
- Advised German supplier in a potential ADCCAC arbitration with contractor on a government funded infrastructure project in the Middle East.
- Represented a solar engineering company in the construction of a 15-megawatt solar project in the Middle East.
- Advised Turkish contractor in preparation for arbitration regarding upgrades to Abu Dhabi's waterway and sewage systems, with claims exceeding USD 135 million.
- Drafted project management and design services agreements for phase one of the Etihad Rail Project (Shah Habshan line) in Abu Dhabi.
- Drafted sewage services contracts with private and public entities on behalf of Abu Dhabi Sewage Services Company (ADSSC).
- Represented lump sum turnkey contractor on various matters in relation to construction of a USD 5.4 billion crude oil pipeline connecting the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. Part of legal team preparing direct cost and delay claims in anticipation for ICSD arbitration (New York law firm working in alliance with prominent London law firm).

REAL ESTATE / COMMERCIAL / OTHER MATTERS

- Liaised with and managed external counsel for a client / Saudi conglomerate, anticipating a DIAC arbitration for an USD 110 million shareholder dispute.
- Managed external counsel (two law firms based in Dubai) for a client / developer in over twenty-five ADCCAC and DIAC arbitrations.
- As co-counsel, represented respondent (transportation company) in two international arbitrations related to transportation and sale of jet fuel to a Swiss company for inter-governmental military alliance forces in Afghanistan.

- Instructed and managed external law firm and tax advisers for a UAE-based Family Office on complex property tax related issues involving properties in the UK.
- Supervised and managed restructuring of UK and offshore real estate holding companies for a Family Office with assets in the UK, France, and Italy.
- Advised a private business owner on restructuring of real estate assets, succession, and estate planning in the UAE and UK.
- Instructed and managed Canadian lawyers for a UAE engineering company in claims filed before the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia related to a project in Abu Dhabi.
- Advised Swiss chocolate manufacturer (family-owned business) on setting up operations in the UAE.
- Managed US IP counsel for a UAE engineering company in purchase of IP assets from a US entity as part of a global acquisition.
- Advised a UAE-owned limited liability company in a joint venture with a US defense contractor and Swedish technology provider, including transfer of assets and intellectual property rights to the UAE-based joint venture entity to gain offset points from “Tawazun” for the US defense contractor in arms sales to the UAE government.
- Advised India’s largest private school establishment on corporate, commercial, and construction matters related to setup and operation of schools in the UAE and expansion into Bahrain and Kuwait.
- Represented UAE Sovereign Wealth Fund in negotiations regarding development of real estate in Bahrain.
- Counseled UAE Sovereign Wealth Fund in a class action related to its investments in US and European funds.
- Advised India’s largest private school group on its UAE operations including compliance with KHDA, ADIC, and Sharjah Education Zone regulations.
- Law firm's sole relationship attorney (for New Jersey commercial and real estate matters) to the world’s largest public corporation by revenue (2005-2008). Responsibilities included management of the client’s account, liaising with client’s legal department and the relevant real estate and corporate teams at the representing law firm.
- Advised one of the largest Indian developers with respect to construction of two major townships in Mumbai and Chennai, India approximating USD 700 million in development costs; representation included contract drafting and negotiations with various parties including US-based design consultants and resident architect in India.
- Represented owner of a commercial building in New York City against the owner’s insurance company for non-payment of covered losses in a claim arising out of extensive water damage to the structure and interiors. The Court of Appeals’ decision in this action set precedent in New York State, allowing for collection of consequential damages due to the insurer’s breach of contract.
- Assisted in preparing draft of the Owners’ Association rules for Sun & Sky Tower on Reem Island, Abu Dhabi.
- Represented developer in relation to a Master Development Agreement between a UAE company and a Chinese developer for development of two towers in a major Middle Eastern city.

Speaking Engagements & Publications

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker: Resolve Academy – Building a Career in Arbitration (2026).
- Moderator: Riyadh International Dispute Week 2026 – "On the Line: Where Courts Help or Hinder Arbitration" (2026).
- Trainer: CIArb Applied Fellowship Program (2024).
- Trainer: DIAC Arbitration Centre Diploma Program (2023- present).
- Moderator: "Energy Transition Landscape Insights and Strategies for Effective Procurement and Dispute Resolution", International Bar Association’s Annual Conference, Paris, France (Nov. 2023).
- Instructor / Trainer: Dubai International Arbitration Centre's (DIAC) Stage Two Arbitration Training, Dubai, UAE (Oct. 2023).
- Speaker: "Ask the Arbitrator", Vinson & Elkins’ Global Construction Conference Series, Middle East Construction, Engineering & Infrastructure Conference, Dubai, UAE (Oct. 2023).
- Instructor: "The Moot Court Bench, International Commercial Arbitration Program", Colombo, Sri Lanka (Jun. 2023).
- Instructor / Trainer: Dubai International Arbitration Centre's (DIAC) Stage One Arbitration Training, Dubai, UAE (May 2022). Annual Conference, Miami, USA (Oct. 2022).
- Speaker: "Forum on the Key Issues and Opportunities for Female Legal Professionals Seeking Greater Diversity within the Profession", in partnership with Arbitra International and with the support of Arbitral Women, the GREAT Legal Services team at the UK Ministry of Justice, Dubai, UAE (May 2022).
- Speaker: "Issues Arising During the Life Cycle of the UAE Seated Arbitrations", online event organized by CIArb’s UAE Chapter, Dubai, UAE (2020).

- Moderator: "Update on the Society of Construction Law's Delay and Disruption Protocol - What's New, What's Better?", webinar presented by the IBA International Construction Projects Committee of the IBA Section on Energy, Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Law (SEERIL) (Sep. 2020).
- Moderator: "Effective Tools in Managing Diversity and Inclusion Challenges in the Construction Industry", webinar presented by the IBA International Construction Projects Committee of the IBA Section on Energy, Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Law (SEERIL) (Oct. 2020).
- Speaker / Tutor: US Department of Commerce – Office of the General Counsel – Commercial Law Development Program Lecturer on International Commercial Arbitration for Maldives International Arbitration Centre, Malaysian International Arbitration Centre, Kabul Arbitration Centre, Sri Lankan International Arbitration Centre (2018 – present).
- Moderator: "Use of New Technology Including Blockchain and Smart Contracts in Relation to the Construction Industry", IBA Working Weekend, Athens, Greece (May 2019).
- Moderator / Co-panelist: "An Inter-jurisdictional Approach to Penalties and Liquidated Damages in Construction Contracts. Differences, Similarities and Red Flags for the Unwary", International Bar Association's Committee on Construction Law, Edinburgh, UK (May 2017.)
- Speaker / Co-panelist: "Quantum in International Arbitration", 5th ICC MENA Conference on International Arbitration, Dubai, UAE (Apr. 2017).
- Speaker: "Lessons Learned from the Construction of Major Sports Facilities in the World – Road to Construction of Qatar's 2022 FIFA Sports Facilities", International Bar Association Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., USA (Sep. 2016).
- Speaker: "Construction and Engineering - Legal Aspects of Mega Projects", Saudi Law Training Center, Dubai, UAE (May 2015).
- Moderator: "EPC Contracts - Are They All Inclusive?", International Bar Association's Planning Committee Meeting, Cancun, Mexico (May 2015).
- Speaker: "Use and Abuse of Tiered Dispute Resolution Processes", International Bar Association Annual Conference, Boston, MA, USA (Oct. 2013).
- Speaker: "Construction Contracting in the Middle East", Kharafi National Group Workshop, Kuwait (Jun 2013).
- Speaker: "Insight on the Region and the Challenges Faced: Defining the Areas Where You Should Develop
- Speaker: Mock Session on Procurement under FIDIC Redbook, IBA Annual Conference, Madrid, Spain (Oct. 2009).

PUBLICATIONS

- "Prevention of Claims – The Various Paths" (book chapter) in Major Issues in International Construction Law, published by Wiley (Dec. 2025).
- "Mediation: What Are the Benefits to Clients and Counsel?", Lawyer Monthly / Online (Jul. 2022).
- "Questionnaire: Aarta Alkarimi, Diversity and Inclusion Officer", IBA's Construction Law International, Vol. 16, No. 04 (Dec. 2021).
- "Country Update - Changes to Dubai's Legislation on Arbitration Centers", IBA's Construction Law International (Mar. 2022).
- "Keys to Successful Project Establishment", IBA's Construction Law International (Apr. 2019).
- "IBA Guidelines on Conflict of Interest in International Arbitration" (Peer reviewed Persian / Farsi translation) (Apr. 2018).
- "IBA Rules on Taking of Evidence in International Arbitration", (Peer reviewed Persian / Farsi translation) (Apr. 2018).
- "IBA Rules on Taking on Party Representation", (Peer reviewed Persian / Farsi translation) (2018).
- "Tackling Global Construction Claims in the Middle East", BCDR International Arbitration Review, Vol. 4, Issue 1, pp. 175-193 (2017).
- "The Road to Qatar's Construction of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Stadiums", IBA's Construction Law International (Oct. 2016).
- "Tips for Construction Contractors to Avoid Costly Missteps", Chadbourne's Project Finance NewsWire and Lexology Online (Apr. 2013).
- "Construction Law 2008", United States Chapter Getting the Deal Through (2008)."Construction Law 2007", United States Chapter Getting the Deal Through (2007).