

Onyema Arbitration Services (UK) Limited

Registered Address: 15 The Broadway, Woodford Green, Essex, 1GB 0HL, England
Telephone: +44 7960942317; Emails: eo3@soas.ac.uk AND emilia@onyema-arbitration.co.uk
Website: www.onyema-arbitration.co.uk

Professor (Dr) Nneka Emilia Onyema, PhD, FCI Arb Arbitrator Profile

Professor Onyema is an independent arbitrator based in London, with significant experience as chair, co-arbitrator, and sole arbitrator in international arbitrations under common law and civil law. She has particular experience with complex commercial disputes, across a range of industry sectors, including energy, mining and life sciences. She also acts as a legal expert witness in support of arbitration.

Professor Onyema is qualified to practice law in Nigeria as a barrister and solicitor and as a Solicitor in England and Wales. She is a full Professor of International Commercial Law at SOAS University of London, and she holds a PhD from Queen Mary University of London.

Arbitrator Experience at May 2026:

Presiding Arbitrator	Co-Arbitrator	Sole Arbitrator	Institutional	Ad hoc
7	7	14	19	9

Seats

Professor Onyema has acted as arbitrator in arbitrations seated in Abu Dhabi, Abuja, Cairo, Johannesburg, Kigali, Lagos, London, Mauritius, Nairobi, Singapore, Tehran, and the Hague.

Applicable Laws

Professor Onyema has acted as arbitrator in disputes arising out of contracts governed by the following laws: England, Egypt, Kenya, India, Iran, Nigeria, Mauritius, South Africa, New York, Singapore, Switzerland, UAE, Zambia, and under the Incoterms®.

Industry Experience

Professor Onyema has experience as arbitrator across a range of industry sectors including, construction projects, shareholder agreements, post-merger and acquisition agreements, financial and debt agreements, commodities and sale of goods agreements, share options agreements, mining agreements, oil and gas agreements, pharmaceutical agreements, and real Estate and investment agreements.

Arbitral Institution Experience

Professor Onyema has experience with arbitrations under all major arbitral rules, including ICC, SIAC, LCIA, KIAC, CIArb Kenya, PCA (UNCITRAL), and Arbitration Centre of Iran Chamber of Commerce (ACIC). She was the alternate tribunal secretary of the Commonwealth Secretariat (Administrative) Arbitral Tribunal (2007-2019).

Details of Arbitral Appointments

As Presiding Arbitrator:

1. Appointed by the co-arbitrators in an oil and gas upstream contract between an oil major and a domestic Nigerian oil company.
2. Appointed by the co-arbitrators in a LCIA arbitration over a pharmaceutical sales and purchase agreement between American and Indian parties.
3. Appointed by the co-arbitrators in a mining (construction) dispute between South African and Zambian parties.
4. Appointed by the co-arbitrators in a construction dispute between Zambian parties.
5. Appointed by the co-arbitrators over a share options purchase dispute between South African parties.
6. Appointed by the co-arbitrators in PCA construction dispute between Ethiopian state agency and Greek construction company.
7. Appointed by the co-arbitrators over a shareholder's contract dispute between Belgian and Rwandese parties under KIAC Rules.

As Co-Arbitrator:

1. Appointed by the claimant in a construction dispute between Middle Eastern and Indian parties.
2. Appointed by the ACIC in a sales dispute between Iranian and Ukrainian parties.
3. Appointed by the PCA in a services contract in the oil and gas sector between an IOC and a private domestic Nigerian oil company.
4. Appointed by the PCA in a construction dispute between a Nigerian state agency and a Turkish construction company over a world bank funded project.
5. Appointed by the respondent in a shareholder's joint venture in a satellite transaction dispute between Rwandese parties under KIAC rules.
6. Appointed by the Respondent in a service contract for works and decorations under KIAC rules.
7. Appointed by ADCCAC in a real estate investment contract dispute between UAE and Kuwaiti parties under ADCCAC Rules.

As Sole Arbitrator:

1. Appointed by SIAC in a shares acquisition contract dispute between Singapore and South African parties.
2. Appointed by Kenya CIArb in an agency contract dispute between Kenyan parties.
3. Appointed by CRCICA in a shares purchase contract dispute between Italian and Egyptian parties under the CRCICA rules.

4. Appointed by ACIC in a distribution contract dispute between Iranian and Iraqi parties.
5. Appointed by ICC in a construction (delay) dispute between Chinese and Kenyan parties.
6. Appointed by CIArb-BAS on loan agreement between Irish and Indian parties.
7. Appointed by ACIC in a commodities sales contract dispute between Iranian parties.
8. Appointed by ICC in a distributorship contract dispute between South African and Zimbabwean parties.
9. Appointed by CIArb-BAS on loan agreement between Irish and Indian parties.
10. Appointed by KIAC under Swiss Rules on breach of contract (administered by KIAC) between Rwandese and Swiss NGOs.
11. Appointed by CIArb-BAS on loan agreement between Irish and Brazilian parties.
12. Appointed by CIArb-BAS on loan agreement between Irish and Senegalese parties.
13. Appointed by Abu Dhabi CCAC in a sub-contract construction dispute between UAE parties.
14. Appointed by ICC in real estate fund investment contract dispute between South African and Mauritian parties.

In support of arbitration institutional development, Professor Onyema sits on the **arbitration courts** of:

- Asian International Arbitration Centre, Kuala Lumpur (AIAC) since 2026
- Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Arbitration Centre, since 2024
- Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC), since 2023
- Casablanca International Mediation and Arbitration Centre (CIMAC) since 2023
- Tanzania International arbitration Centre (TIAC), since 2022
- Lagos Chamber of Commerce International Arbitration Centre (LACIAC) since 2015
- Lagos Court of Arbitration, since 2015

Professor Onyema was the President of the Council of Advisers, Libyan Centre for International Commercial Arbitration, 2018-2021; BVI IAC Arbitration Committee from (2022-2025); and Member of the Advisory Committee, Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA) from 2017-2024.

Arbitrator Panels

Professor Onyema is listed as arbitrator with the following:

- Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) (2026)
- China International Economic and Trade arbitration Commission (CIETAC) (2026)
- Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) (2025)
- Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) (2024)
- Oman Arbitration Centre (OAC) (2024)
- Arbitrate AD (Abu Dhabi) (2023)
- OHADA-CCJA (2023)
- Arbitration Foundation of Southern Africa (AFSA) (2023)
- Energy Disputes Arbitration Centre, Istanbul (EDAC) (2022)
- Mauritius International Arbitration Centre, (MIAC) (2022)

- Nairobi Centre for International Arbitration, (NCIA) (2019)
- Kigali International Arbitration Centre, (KIAC) (2016)

Professional Memberships

- Honorary Overseas Member, Commercial Bar association of England & Wales (COMBAR) since 2025
- ICC United Kingdom National Committee since 2023
- London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) 2008-2021, 2024
- Equal Representation in Arbitration Steering Committee since 2019
- Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy since 2018
- Arbitral Women since 2018
- International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA) since 2015
- Society of Legal Scholars since 2006
- Law Society, England & Wales since 2002 (as non-practising solicitor)
- Pan African Lawyers Union (Life member)
- Chartered Institute of Arbitrators London since 1999 (as a Fellow since 2008)
- International Bar Association, 1996-2024
- Nigeria Bar Association, since 1989

Legal Expert Witness Experience

Professor Onyema provided expert opinions in support of two ICC international arbitration cases on Nigerian law on set off, and on Nigerian Export Processing Zone law.

Admissions

- Nigeria, barrister and solicitor, 1989
- England & Wales, Solicitor, 2002

Professor Onyema practiced commercial and corporate law at various firms, 1989-2000.

Academic Qualifications

- University of Jos, LLB, 1988
- King's College London, LLM, 2001
- Queen Mary University of London, PhD, 2007

Academic Experience

Professor Onyema joined SOAS University of London in 2007 where she is currently a full Professor of International Commercial Law. She holds visiting professorships at various other universities (Stellenbosch, Fribourg, and Juba) and has also held senior management roles at SOAS as the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education, 2020-2021; 2023), Deputy Dean (Education) Faculty of Law and Social Sciences (2011-2013).

Professor Onyema teaches on the postgraduate programme: International Investment Law, International Arbitration: Law and Theory, International Arbitration: Practice. On the undergraduate programme, she teaches: Law of Commercial Arbitration, Commercial Law in a Global Context. She supervises both LLM and PhD research on topics in her areas of expertise.

She is the inaugural director of the SOAS Arbitration and Dispute Resolution Centre (SADRC) a knowledge exchange, training, and research centre at the SOAS School of Law, founder/trustee of the Arbitration Fund for African Students (AFAS), and co-author of the African Promise (2019).

Research Projects

- Lead investigator for African states on the Compliance Politics and International Investment Disputes (COPIID) research project of Pluricourts of the University of Oslo funded by the Norwegian Research Council: 2022 to 2025.
- Lead Investigator: SOAS Arbitration in Africa research project: 2015-2018.
- Lead Investigator: SOAS Arbitration in Africa biennial survey: 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024, 2025.
- Convenor, SOAS Arbitration in Africa conference series: 2015 to present.
- Convenor, SOAS Counsel in Arbitration Training since 2022.
- Contributor, Bar Council Responses to the Law Commission's consultations on the review of the 1996 English Arbitration Act 1996.

Select Publications

Professor Onyema actively publishes and speaks on topics relevant to her research interests. A select list of her publications includes:

- International Commercial Arbitration and the Arbitrator's Contract (Routledge, 2010)
- Rethinking the Role of African National Courts in Arbitration (Kluwer, 2018),
- "African Participation in the ICSID System: Appointment and Disqualification of Arbitrators", ICSID Review - Foreign Investment Law Journal (2020),
- "Reimagining the Framework for resolving Intra-African Commercial Disputes in the Context of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement", World Trade Review (2019);
- "African Practitioners, International Arbitration, and Inclusivity" (ICCA Congress Series No 21, 2022).
- - with Adarsh Saxena, "Energy Transition in Contractual Practice, ICSID Review - Foreign Investment Law Journal (2025) Vol 39(3)
- "Corruption, Access to Arbitration for Local Communities: Mitigating the Cost of Corruption and Providing Access to Justice for Local Communities", Arbitration: The International Journal for Arbitration, Mediation and Dispute Management, Vol 90 Issue 4 (2024) 536-554.
- "AI and Arbitration in Sub-Saharan African Countries", in Amy J. Schmitz, Marco Giacalone and Pietro Ortolani (eds) *The Cambridge Handbook of AI in Civil Dispute Resolution*, CUP (2026) 262-274.

A full list of publications is available on my [website](#).

Professional Awards/Recognition

In recognition of her expertise and excellence in both arbitration practice and knowledge exchange activities, Professor Onyema has been recognised:

- Africa Arbitration Powerlist, 2026
- GAR Diversity Award for the work of Arbitration Fund for African Students, 2025
- Shortlisted for GAR Best paper/presentation in Arbitration, 2025
- Africa Arbitration Association Best Arbitration Presentation/Paper award, 2024

- CPR Diversity in ADR Award, 2024
- Top 20 Arbitrators in Africa, 2023
- Top 30 Arbitrators in Africa, 2022
- GAR shortlist for best initiative for [African Promise](#), 2021

Professor (Dr) Emilia Onyema, PhD, FCI Arb
May 2026