Sarah Bafadhel

Junior Counsel - Above 15 Years
CALLED 2009

"Sarah is one of those rare advocates who is able to combine an international and domestic practice together."
CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS, 2027



Sarah Bafadhel specialises in international criminal law, public international law and human rights law.

She litigates on behalf of clients in high profile and complex cases before international and regional fora which have resulted in landmark decisions developing international jurisprudence.

Sarah provides direct and strategical advice to individual clients as well as governmental and non-governmental actors on the implementation of international law and standards.

Background and Expertise

Having appeared as counsel in domestic, regional and international courts, Sarah provides tailored advice and representation to clients across various stages of investigation and judicial proceedings.

Sarah has been instructed to provide consultation to various governments and non-governmental organisations across Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and

Central America with regard to the implementation of international criminal law, transitional justice and public international law.

She has also prepared legal submissions on behalf of individual clients before the United Nations Human Rights Council; the United Nations Working Groups and Special Rapporteurs; the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and in alien tort proceedings before United States District Courts.

Sarah also specialises in the delisting of designated individuals and entities which are subject to sanctioning regimes adopted by the UN, EU, US and UK and has appeared in proceedings before the General Court of the European Union and European Court of Justice. She has also assisted clients in challenging INTERPOL red notices.

She has also appeared in domestic criminal proceedings before the courts of England and Wales and currently advises on judicial review proceedings, extradition proceedings and immigration cases.

Sarah is fluent in Arabic and can provide advice in either English or Arabic.

Notable Cases

Advisory

Government of South Sudan, September 2021-ongoing

Representation of designated individuals and entities subject to UN, US, EU and UK sanctions. In addition, providing technical training and legal advice in relation to wide range of judicial matters including, inter alia, electoral processes for forthcoming elections, documenting human rights abuses, military-related abuses, violations of arms embargo and ICC procedures.

United Nations International Impartial and Independent Mechanism, July 2020-March 2021

Providing technical and expert assistance in relation to universal jurisdiction laws across twenty-two states.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom – February 2012-April 2012; October-December 2017; November-December 2021

- Syrian Arab Republic (Department for International Development (independent).
- Providing technical assistance and training of investigators and lawyers for collection of forensic and witness evidence. Somaliland (Department for International Development (Axiom Global).
- Providing technical assistance to judges and prosecutors in relation to the establishment of a continuing professional development programme.

- Iraq and Kurdistan (Axiom Global). Providing legal advice in relation to compatibility of data protection laws with international standards

Government of Arab Republic of Egypt, January 2015- December 2016

Providing legal advice in relation to election processes in accordance with international standards.

Libya Information Centre, January 2014 – December 2016 (confidential)

Ministry of Human Rights in the Republic of Yemen and Yemen Center for Transitional Justice, March 2013-May 2016

Providing legal advice in a range of matters concerning human right abuses and ICC procedures

Amnesty International, February 2014 (confidential)

No Peace Without Justice (Bahrain) August 2012-January 2013 (confidential)

Maritime Asset Security & Training Limited, March 2012- January 2013

Providing legal advice in relation to maritime law.

Syrian Emergency Task Force, November 2011January 2013

Providing legal advice in relation to collection of evidence.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2012

Legal consultation.

Advisory

International Crime

Prosecutor v. Alfred Yekatom, August 2023-ongoing

Sarah represents Mr. Alfred Yekatom in on-going ICC proceedings concerning the commission of alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity, including enlistment and use of child soldiers in active hostilities, committed in the Central African Republic between 5 December 2013 and August 2014.

International Criminal Court

Read more on ICC CPI

Situation in the Republic of the Philippines, February 2023-July 2023

Sarah is engaged to represent the Government of the Republic of the Philippines in relation to on-going appellate proceedings concerning the Office of the Prosecutor's request to investigate crimes allegedly committed on the territory of the Philippines between 1 November 2011 and 16 March 2019 in the context of the so-called 'war on drugs' campaign.

International Criminal Court

Read more here

Council of the European Union v. Aisha Muammer Mohamed El-Qaddafi, July 2021-April 2023

Sarah successfully represented Dr. Qaddafi in appellate proceedings before the European Court of Justice in relation to the annulment of sanctions, securing Dr. Qaddafi's delisting from EU restrictive measures.

European Court of Justice

Read more here

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Prosecutor v. Turinabo et al., 2018 – 2021

Sarah assisted as legal consultant assisting the defence of Mr. Anselme Nzabonimpa in relation to contempt proceeding before the Residual Mechanism. The allegations stemmed from the review proceedings in Prosecutor v. Augustin Ngirabatware, who was convicted for genocide before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The case primarily concerned the interrogation of forensic evidence collected from Mr. Nzabonimpa.

Read more here

International Criminal Court, Prosecutor v. Al Hassan, October 2019 – March 2020

Sarah acted as Associate Counsel assisting the defence of Mr. Al Hassan in relation to allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the situation of Mali.

Read more here

General Court of the European Union, Aisha Muammer Mohamed El-Qaddafi v Council of the European Union, 2019 - 2021

Sarah appeared before the General Court of the European Union to secure the annulment of restrictive measures implemented by the Council of Europe against Ms. El-Qaddafi in relation to the situation in Libya.

Read more here

General Court of the European Union, Abdel-Majid Gaoud v. Council of the European Union, 2018-2021

Sarah appeared as Counsel in proceedings before the General Court of the European Union to secure the annulment of restrictive measures implemented by the Council of Europe against the former Minister of Agriculture in relation to the situation in Libya. The case continues following death of Mr. Gaoud in March 2021.

Read more here

Special Tribunal for Lebanon, Prosecutor v. Ayyash et al., 2013-2020

Sarah appeared as Co-Counsel representing the interests of Mr. Assad Hassan Sabra in international terrorism proceedings related to the death of former Prime Minister for Lebanon, Rafik Hariri, in 2005 securing an acquittal. The evidence relied on by the Prosecution primarily concerned telecommunication evidence.

Read more here

General Court of the European Union, Aisha Muammer Mohamed El-Qaddafi v Council of the European Union, 2015-2017

Sarah appeared before the General Court of the European Union to secure the annulment of restrictive measures implemented by the Council of Europe against Ms. El-Qaddafi in relation to the situation in Libya.

Read more here

International Criminal Court, Prosecutor v. Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi, 2013-2016

Sarah assisted in the representation of Mr. Gaddafi during admissibility proceedings before the International Criminal Court. Mr. Gaddafi is charged with murder and persecution as crimes against humanity alleged to have been committed during the Libyan conflict in 2011.

Read more here

Prosecutor v Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi, 2013-16

International Criminal Court (ICC) Sarah assisted in the representation of Gaddafi during admissibility proceedings before the ICC. Gaddafi is charged with murder and persecution, as crimes against humanity alleged to have been committed during the Libyan conflict in 2011.

See ICC website

Dr Arthur Porter v Panamanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014-15

Assisting local legal representatives in Panama Administrative Court.

Prosecutor v Alfred Yekatom

Associate Counsel representing Mr Alfred Yekatom who is charged with the war crimes of murder, cruel treatment, torture, directing attacks against the civilian population, directing attacks against a building dedicated to religion, conscription, enlistment and use of children under the age of 15 years to participate actively in hostilities, and displacement; and (ii) the crimes against humanity of murder, deportation, forcible transfer of population, imprisonment and other forms of severe deprivation of physical liberty, torture, persecution and other inhumane acts. The acts are alleged to have been committed in the Central African Republic during the conflict in 2013-2014.

International Criminal Court

Read more on International Criminal Court

Prosecutor v Ayyash et al, 2013

Special Tribunal for Lebanon Sarah appears as co-counsel representing the interests of Assad Hassan Sabra in international terrorism proceedings related to the death of former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafik Hariri, in 2005. See summary on the tribunal website.

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Prosecutor v. Delić, 2013

Sarah assisted in pre-review proceedings in relation to the deceased Rasim Delić following public statements of Judge Frederik Harhoff

Read more here

Saidati Mukakibibi and Agnes Uwimana v State of Rwanda, 2013

Assisting local legal representatives in Rwandan Supreme Court.

Aziz et al v Syrian Arab Republic, 2012-13

Assisting local representatives in the US District Court for the District of Columbia.

Prosecutor v Sayyed et al, 2011-13

Assisting local representatives at the International Crimes Tribunal (Bangladesh).

International Crime

International Human Rights

El Hajjiouji v. Belgium, August 2022-October 2022

Consultation in respect of application brought by Mr. Nordin El Hajjiouji in relation to violation of

article 6 arising from domestic criminal proceedings conducted in Belgium.

European Court of Human Rights

International Human Rights

Achievements

Memberships

- General Council of the Bar
- The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple
- Peace and Justice Initiative and International Bar Association

Appointments

- Chairperson of the ADC Amicus Curiae Committee
- Chair on a International Arbitration Panel
- May 2022: Focal Point for Equality and Inclusivity, Association of Defence Counsel
- March 2019: American Bar Association Task Force, “International Criminal Standards Project 2019”.
- November 2018: Ombudsman Pro bono Counsel List to assist persons subject to Al Qaeda sanctions regime

Publications

- Author: S. Bafadhel, *'Abuse of Process Doctrine in International Criminal Proceedings'* in D. Young, M. Summers & D. Corker (eds), Abuse of Process in Criminal Proceedings (Bloomsbury Professional: Fourth edition, 2014), pp. 448 to 484.
- Author: T. Cadman & S.Bafadhel *'Courting Controversy'* Criminal Bar Quarterly, Issue 3 Autumn 2011, Criminal Bar Association.

Education

- 2008-2009: BPP Professional Education, Bar Vocational Course
- 2005-2006: King’s College University of London, LLM Masters in Law specialising in Public International Law
- 2002-2005: University of Birmingham, LLB (Hons) Law

Recognition

"Sarah is very much a rising star in the world of international criminal law. It is only a matter of time before she is recognised as King's Counsel. She is personable, professional and ferociously intelligent." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Sarah is one of those rare advocates who is able to combine an international and domestic practice together." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Sarah always finds creative ways to put forward useful arguments." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Sarah is a highly skilled lawyer with a great legal mind and impressive knowledge of international law." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Sarah knows the ICC world in and out." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Sarah is excellent across all categories, highly sophisticated and expert legal work." **Chambers and Partners, 2026**

"Sarah is a tremendous lawyer with a brilliant legal mind. Her ability to draft complex submissions in international criminal law is astonishing." **Legal 500, 2026**

"She provides outstanding client service strong strategic vision and top-tier advocacy." **Chambers and Partners, 2026**

"She is an incredible asset in a legal team as her inputs are always on point and creative when necessary for tricky factual or legal points of discussion." **Legal 500, 2026**

"Not only is Sarah brilliant, impressive in her legal knowledge and drafting skills, but she is also a wonderful, professional colleague with impeccable ethics and human qualities." **Chambers and Partners, 2026**

"She is a true dynamo in her field. She has a meticulous eye for detail with unparalleled knowledge. She brings a vast wealth of knowledge and tackles each case with a steely determination." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"She has a meticulous eye for detail with unparalleled knowledge." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"She is an excellent counsel, an outstanding drafter and a master in international jurisprudence." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"She brings a vast wealth of knowledge and tackles each case with a steely determination." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"Sarah is an outstanding practitioner with good drafting and advocacy skills and her knowledge of international criminal law and procedure is excellent." **Legal 500, 2024**

"Sarah produces supremely good drafting." **Chambers and Partners, 2024**

"She's very impressive when making legal submissions." **Chambers and Partners, 2024**

"Sarah is a highly sought-after team member for international criminal cases. She is very bright, she works incredibly hard and she is a go-to person if you want a sensible insight into even the most esoteric aspects of international criminal law." **Legal 500, 2023**

"Sarah is a highly sought-after team member for international criminal cases. She is very bright, she works incredibly hard and she is a go-to person if you want a sensible insight into even the most esoteric aspects of international criminal law." **Chambers and Partners, 2023**

"Her strategic skills are excellent and she's a real team player." **Chambers and Partners, 2023**

Activities and Interests

- Conference speaker on international law
- Trainer on international procedure
- Editor on international law