Steven Kay KC



King's Counsel
CALLED 1977
SILK 1997

"Steven Kay is simply outstanding in his field."
CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS, 2027

Steven Kay KC is a leading international criminal lawyer with a global reputation. He won International Law Silk of the Year at the Legal 500 Bar Awards 2026.

He has been in the landmark cases that have established modern international criminal law including: the first UN trial at the Yugoslavia Tribunal (Dusko Tadic); the first trial of a former Head of State (ex-President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic); the first trial at the ICC of an incumbent Head of State (President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya). Steven is experienced in advising clients at the crisis stage of an international situation by setting out their options and guiding their responses, whilst also making the preparations necessary for future litigation.

As a leading trial lawyer, Steven's career has involved cases in the international courts, but he is also engaged by individuals, governments and organisations to advise and represent them when they face a crisis and need to challenge matters of national and international concern. Below are some examples - the 30 years conflict in Sri Lanka between the Tamils and the State; Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood; Montenegro Corruption and Conflicts of Interest - see Report and TV interview Corruption in Montenegro.; Human rights abuse alert

Algeria; IBA report on Political Prisons in North Korea - available here; Armenia – Azerbaijan conflict Read Report ; A Report on the Lundin Case commissioned by the Board of Lundin Energy. Watch the video interviews here. For the causes of the 2013 and 2016 conflicts in South Sudan that discredited the narratives of the UN and AU - Read South Sudan Report; Libya: Voice of the Tribes a report in support of the peace and unification process – available here

Steven's international fraud, bribery and corruption practice has included cases of global interest and are often multijurisdictional. The fraud cases often arise in complex international commercial transactions where he may be engaged to work with multi-national and multi-disciplinary teams. The bribery and corruption cases have involved international commodities traded at high value on the world markets. In 2022 he was lead counsel in the private prosecution at Southwark Crown Court of solicitor Stephen Jones who fraudulently misappropriated funds of $16,000,000 intended for the purchase of a Scottish castle.

Other international areas of practice include International Human Rights, Sanctions and Interpol Red Notices. These cases often involve politically or financially motivated attacks upon individuals in states where the Rule of Law has been subverted, particularly in so-called totalitarian democracies. National and international strategies may be needed to defend the rights of those attacked. In April 2022 he presented a review of UK sanctions laws to the All Party Parliamentary Corporate Governance Group in the Houses of Parliament. Some of his interesting cases are listed below. In 2025, Steven became engaged in the Avatari Blue Carbon Project in Kenya an environmental regeneration initiative established under the Climate Change Act 2023 and the Paris Agreement 2016.

Steven is registered to accept instructions under Direct Public Access and is licensed to litigate in the courts of England and Wales.

Notable Cases

International Crime

Libya, 2024

Steven Kay KC leads the 9BR Chambers team that produced the report Libya: Voice of the Tribes commissioned to support the peace and unification process for Libya after the failure of the UN and international community to provide the pathway for elections and reunite a divided Libya.

Libya: Voice of the Tribes the report available here

Government of South Sudan, 2021-ongoing

Provision of international legal services to cover advice upon international legal issues, internal armed conflicts, the 2018 Revitalised Peace Agreement and sanctions. A key report Pushing the Reset Button for South Sudan was drafted on the conflicts of 2013 and 2016 that challenged the narratives of the AU and EU South Sudan Reports

International Company X, 2022

Advice upon conducting business in a war zone.

Natalie Chang et al v Republic of South Sudan, Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs US District Court of Columbia

Claim for damages by 9 Claimants in US District Court for District of Columbia against RoSS and MDVA alleging liability for serious crimes by South Sudan Defence Forces. Successful challenge to claim based upon state immunity.

Read more:

- The Standard Media
- Sudans Post
- Reuters
- Hausfeld
- Case Text

Soltan v Beblawi, District Court of Columbia, USA

Claim against former Prime Minister of Egypt Hazem El Beblawi alleging responsibility for torture arising from the arrest in Rabaa Square in 2013 of the Plaintiff. Mr El Beblawi was the IMF Ambassador for 11 Middle Eastern countries. The DCC dismissed the claim, recognising the diplomatic immunity of Mr El Bablawi. Report here

Report Armenia – Azerbaijan conflict, 2021

Read Report

Lundin Energy Company 2019-2022

Consultant to Swedish company Lundin Energy upon universal jurisdiction laws alleging war crimes committed in Sudan 1997-2003 by the company, its Chairman and CEO.

See A Report on the Lundin Case

The Prosecutor v Uhuru Kenyatta, 2010-15

International Criminal Court proceedings commenced in December 2010 against President Uhuru Kenyatta of the Republic of Kenya, and son of the first President of the nation, Jomo Kenyatta, alleging a leading role in the post-election violence of 2007 - 2008 for which he was charged with

crimes against humanity. The result changed the course of African politics.

Read the defence report of the trial at the ICC

Steven Kay KC delivers opening statement for Uhuru Kenyatta, 21 September 2011

Steven Kay KC presents Defence evidence for Uhuru Kenyatta, 28 September 2011

Steven Kay KC examines Uhuru Kenyatta in chief, 29 September 2011

Steven Kay KC presents closing argument for Uhuru Kenyatta, 5 October 2011

Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal, 2010-2013

Representing religious and political leaders prosecuted at the Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal and alleged to have committed war crimes in 1971 in the conflict to create the state of Bangladesh. At a conference in Dakhar in October 2010 the defence campaign was started by exposing the flaws of the ICTA 1973.

The Prosecutor v Cermak, 2007-2011

International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia trial of three Croatian Generals arising from Operation Storm in August 1995 that resulted in the liberation of territory from the RSK. Gillian Higgins of 9BRi was co-counsel in this case, described as the most important trial in the history of Croatia. The prosecution evidence was largely based upon UN witnesses.

Steven Kay KC presents arguments on Article 98bis in The Prosecutor v Gotovina et al, ICTY, 2009

Steven Kay KC cross-examines an Expert Witness in The Prosecutor v Gotovina et al, 2009

Steven Kay KC presents closing argument for the Cermak Defence, The Prosecutor v Gotovina et al

The Prosecutor v Slobodan Milosevic, 2001-2006

U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia appointed Steven in September 2001 as amicus curiae with responsibility for defence issues in the trial of the ex-President of Serbia. In September 2004, he was appointed the Court Assigned Defence Counsel for Slobodan Milosevic with Gillian Higgins as co-counsel. The trial was upon 3 joined indictments concerning the wars waged in Kosovo, Bosnia and Croatia in the 1990s and was the largest international criminal trial in its scope.

Steven Kay KC presents submissions as Assigned Defence Counsel before the ICTY on the right to self-representation

Steven Kay KC presents submissions as Amicus Curiae before the ICTY

The Prosecutor v Alfred Musema, 1998-2001

U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. This was the first trial of a civilian alleging command responsibility for genocide. The defence team included Gillian Higgins of 9BRi. They were the first U.N. Defence counsel to enter Rwanda to conduct investigations. The investigations produced important and critical evidence for the case overlooked by prosecution investigators in the field.

The Prosecutor v Dusko Tadic, 1996-1997

U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. This was the first United Nations international war crimes trial and the first since the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials. This landmark trial established the foundation for modern international criminal law. Tadic was charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity. The case set the foundations for the future conduct of international trials.

Sudan, 2008-2009

Advisor to the government of Sudan re: referral by UN Security Council of Darfur situation to the International Criminal Court and the arrest warrant issued for President Bashir.

Syria, 2005-2007

Advisor to the Syrian Government and individuals concerning the UN investigation into the assassination of Lebanese ex-Premier, Rafik Hariri and 14 related terrorist explosions that is the subject of the jurisdiction of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. The cases against the Syrians instigated by the IIIC were discontinued.

International Piracy, 2012

Drafted with David Hammond the 100 Series Rules for the Use of Force by a Flag State for submission to the IMO. Advising upon the liabilities of security companies, insurers, charterers and individuals in the use of force to protect a vessel and all aboard from piracy or armed robbery at sea. The 100 Series RUF has now received international recognition.

Sri Lanka, 2014

Providing submissions to the OISL of the UNHCHR on behalf of 3 Sri Lankan NGO's upon the 30 years conflict between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE (Tamil Tigers) that resulted in the final defeat of the LTTE in 2009. The 9BR reports challenged the narrative issued by the NGOs and UNHCHR.

To read one of the reports - click here

Egypt, 2015

Commissioned by the State Lawsuit (Litigation) Authority of Egypt to provide a series of reports upon

the Muslim Brotherhood, the first of which "The History of the Muslim Brotherhood" was released on 2 April 2015. The further reports are: The Egyptian Experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in power 2012-2013; The Egyptian Revolution Against the Muslim Brotherhood 2013; and The Current Situation in Egypt. Ongoing international legal advice to the government of Egypt.

View International Crime

International Fraud, Bribery and Corruption

Discovery Land Company v Stephen Jones, 2021

A successful direct access private prosecution at Southwark Crown Court of solicitor Stephen Jones who fraudulently misappropriated funds of $16,000,000 intended for the purchase of a Scottish castle.

Read more on the Daily Mail

Individual X, 2021

Report on business activities and companies of X accused of bribery and corruption by Wall Street Journal. Findings that the article by the WSJ was based upon unreliable and inaccurate hearsay provided by a UK intelligence company.

International Company X, 2020

Advice upon the impact of UK Bribery Act, FCPA and US State law for a global company with UK and US subsidiaries to ensure compliance as a result of sponsorship of political causes.

Re: Mamouka & Badri, 2019

Representing founders of TBC bank Georgia (listed on UK Stock Exchange) in their defence to allegations of money laundering under the Criminal Code of Georgia through a series of transactions in 2007-2008.

Read more on Reuters

Re: WHV, 2019

Overseeing for client various cases in Liechtenstein, Austria, Netherlands, Switzerland, Gibraltar concerning embezzlement by trustees from a Foundation, release of assets from trustees.

Dusko Knesevic, 2019

Montenegro businessman fighting bribery, corruption and sequestration of assets alleged to be orchestrated by President Djukanovic of Montenegro. See here for full story. Report issued 3 May 2019.

FBME, Saab and Saab v Dangate, Brown and Leighton, 2018

UK Commercial Court, two ex-Metropolitan police officers sued by owners of FBME bank for breach of confidentiality agreement in providing information to Central Bank of Cyprus and US FINCEN of serious criminal conduct and regulatory breaches.

Read more here

SFO v Aramada Oil and Energy Group, 2018

Al Jibouri Multi-jurisdictional case of corruption in the global oil industry linked to UNAOIL investigation.

Read more here

SFO/DOJ v UNAOIL, 2018

Multi-jurisdictional case of corruption in the global oil industry. Representing Ahsani family and UNAOIL in US, UK and elsewhere.

Read more here and here for full story

Perry v Lexinta Group, 2018

A Ponzi scheme fraud by a Swiss registered company using the Hong Kong branch of the Singapore based bank DBS.

Philippa Seilern Asset Tracing, 2018

Asset tracing case for the deceased's family members against a Liechtenstein Foundation.

Read more here for full story.

Top Zinc Ltd v Hilton Hotels, Alix Partners et al, 2018

A portfolio of Hilton hotels bought by Vincent Tchenguiz, leased back to Hilton and eventually put into administration upon default of a loan scheme hedged by Bayerische Landesbank in

circumstances where the value of assets were believed to be undersold.

Read more here

Vincent Tchenguiz and Rawlinson & Hunter, 2015-2017

Advised in claims in the BVI and London against Grant Thornton (UK) and Kaupthing bank (Iceland).

BVI Proceeds of Criminal Conduct law in the Ablyazov litigation, 2017

Expert witness on BVI Proceeds of Criminal Conduct law in the Ablyazov litigation, an international commercial fraud involving the BVI, Russia, Cyprus, Kazakhstan and the UK.

Perry v LOPAG, 2017

Embezzlement and fraud involving a Liechtenstein trust of high value with litigation in Cayman Islands, US, Israel, Switzerland, UK, Liechtenstein. See Mark Hollingsworth, Independent, Thursday 8 March 2018 Liechtenstein: The mysterious tax heaven that's losing the trust of the super-rich.

International Fraud, Bribery and Corruption

International Human Rights

2025 Avatari Blue Carbon Project Kenya a forest regeneration initiative following the Paris Agreement of 2016, Kenya Climate Change Act 2023, and Kenya Carbon Markets Regulations 2024 to provide sustainable development and alleviate poverty through the trading of carbon credits.

Individual X, 2023-ongoing

Challenging the arrest and arbitrary detention of an individual against whom the subject state has made large demands of payment for release. Widescale abuse of Rule of Law by the state.

Alfred Musema at International Residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals, 2023

Application for early release from life sentence after conviction for the offences of genocide, extermination and crimes against humanity in Rwanda Genocide.

Read more on International Crimes Database

Abuse of human rights in Algeria, 2019

Report was commissioned by an individual whose family member had been arbitrarily detained with related attempts to extort money from the family. Human rights abuse alert Algeria

IBA WCC Inquiry into the Political Prisons of Democratic Republic of North Korea, 2016

Inquiry into the Kwanliso (political prisons) arranged by the IBA North American Office and heard by International Judges.

Report available here

Virunga National Park Democratic Republic of Congo, 2012

Pro-bono project for Virunga National Park in DRC to challenge a UK FTSE 200 company, prospecting for oil and gas in the famous UNESCO heritage site and home to the last species of mountain gorillas. This matter involved international environment law, the national laws of DRC and national laws of the company.

Bahrain, 2012-2013

Drafting a report for the ABA ROLI on the effectiveness of the Defence in the criminal justice system of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Devising an 8-stage training programme manual to improve the quality of the Defence counsel that was followed by delivery of the training programme to lawyers and trainers in 2013.

Beslan Victims Complaint v Russia ECtHR, 2011

Steven Kay KC and Eeva Heikkila pro bono case for family victims of the siege at the school in Beslan held hostage by Chechen terrorists in September 2004 and in 2013. Drafted petition to the European Court of Human Rights that was referred to the Russian Government for observations. The case before the Court is that the deaths of the 334 hostages were as a result of the excessive and indiscriminate use of lethal force by the Russian security forces.

Kazakhstan, 2006

With John Traversi of 9BRi training Defence and Prosecution counsel in Kazakhstan how to deal with the introduction of jury trials into the criminal justice system in January 2007.

Guantanamo Bay, 2003

Advised suspects held in US Army captivity on ways and means to exercise their human rights.

LT Interpol-Related Proceedings

Instructed to advise on visa eligibility, breaches of human rights, asylum and status of extradition agreements.

Report on Extradition Bars

Report on extradition bars between Cyprus and China and breaches of Article 3 and 6 of the ECHR.

DW Interpol Proceedings

Chinese national in Interpol proceedings seeking information and challenging a Red Notice.

WZ Interpol Proceedings

Request for data application to Interpol.

Re:L Extradition Proceedings

Legal advice and drafting argument upon grounds to resist extradition request from UAE to Belgium.

International Human Rights

Sanctions

Libyan Asset Recovery Management Office (LARMO), 2023-ongoing

Steven Kay KC leads a team working with LARMO in Tripoli for the phased repatriation for the benefit of the Libyan people of assets that have been stolen, corruptly obtained or frozen under UN sanctions. It is estimated that value of the internationally held frozen assets is over $50bn and that of the stolen assets over $150bn.

Read more:

- Libya Herald
- The Libya Observer
- Libya Review
- Libyan Asset Recovery and Management Office

South Sudan Sanctions, 2022-ongoing

UK OFSI licence to represent designated persons to challenge listing for sanctions by UK. Further sanctions challenges submitted to EU, OFAC and UN. In addition advice on arms embargo and

sanctions upon agencies in the oil production sector of South Sudan's economy.

US Iran Sanctions, 2018

Advisory opinion for Channel Isles company upon the effect of US sanctions on a contract involving Iranian airport security.

Sanctions

Achievements

Associated Work

- Secretary of the Criminal Bar Association of England and Wales 1993-1996
- Prime Minister's Special Committee on Victims in the Criminal Justice System 1995
- Founder Member of the European Criminal Bar Association 1997
- Founder member of the International Criminal Law Bureau 2008
- Chair IBA War Crimes Committee 2012-2016
- Co-Vice Chair IBA Judges Forum 2023-now

Memberships

- Inner Temple
- IBA
- SE Circuit
- CBA
- The Marque
- Quorum

Appointments

- Called to the Bar of the Inner Temple 1977
- Recorder of the Crown Court 1997
- Master of the Bench of Inner Temple 2008
- Co-Chair IBA War Crimes Committee 2012-16
- Special Advisor IBA War Crimes Committee 2017
- Co-Chair ABA International Criminal Justice Standards Working Group 2017
- IBA Co-Vice Chair Judges Forum 2023

Publications

- South Sudan Reports:
  - Pushing the Reset Button - Read here and watch here
  - The Government of South Sudan's Response to The Sentry Report - Read here
  - Setting the Record Straight - Read here and watch here
- The Role of the Defence – Commentary on The Rome Statute of the
- International Criminal Court ed. Casese, Gaeta, Jones OUP 2002
- International Criminal Justice – Westlaw online
- Cases that Changed our Lives – The First Nuremburg Trial And Its Enduring Legacy "Even Rulers Are Under God And The Law

Education

- Leeds University 1973-76
- Inns of Court School of Law 1976-77

Recognition

"Steven Kay KC operates at a very high level, advising heads of state on issues of international importance. His confidence and experience come across like a statesman, whether in court or with the client." **Legal 500, 2027**

"What is great about Steven is that he can meld the geopolitics, which is essential in this area, with a pragmatic outcome for clients; that combination allows him to give really strategic and impressive advice." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Steven is a leading light in this field." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Steven Kay is simply outstanding in his field." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Steven is at the top of his game in the geopolitical prosecution space." **Chambers and Partners, 2026**

"Steven brings a wealth of experience and is able to meld knowledge of the law with very practical advice that is tailored to often very complex needs of clients, whether organisations, companies or Governments." **Legal 500, 2026**

"Steven's excellent reputation precedes him. He is an inspirational leader and has vast expertise and knowledge to assess cases with a unique and decisive perspective that puts him on the winning

path." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"He uses his court-honed advocacy skills to present complicated issues very clearly and succinctly." **Legal 500, 2025**

"He is an inspirational leader and has vast expertise and knowledge to assess cases with a unique and decisive perspective that puts him on the winning path." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"A father figure for international law, who has gravitas and client rapport that is second to none." **Chambers and Partners, 2024**

"He provides exceptional advice that is pragmatic, strategic and timely." **Chambers and Partners, 2024**

"A stalwart of international criminal law." **Chambers and Partners, 2024**

"He has blazed a trail in this area for years now and is at the top of the field." **Chambers and Partners, 2023**

"A pillar of the ICL British Bar." **Chambers and Partners, 2023**

"Mr Kay commands a powerful knowledge of middle east affairs and the workings of foreign governments and their legal systems. He is able to communicate without jargon the nuances between various legal systems and international order and norms. And he is able to get the ear of top officials to facilitate decision-making." **Legal 500, 2022**