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+44 (0)20 7583 1770

Tom Leary



"Tom is a supremely intelligent and compelling advocate."
– LEGAL 500, 2025

Year of call: **2012**
Degree: **MA (Oxon) Law with Law Studies in Europe (Oxford and Leiden); LLM (Toronto)**

Tom is a leading senior junior who is instructed in some of the most complex commercial, sanctions and public law cases, often with an international element. He is recommended in the fields of Commercial Litigation, Civil Fraud, Sanctions and Public Law, and has been described as "a supremely intelligent and compelling advocate" (Legal 500, 2025). He also has extensive arbitration experience under the ICC, LCIA, UNCITRAL, ICSID, LMAA, AIAC and SIAC rules.

Tom's wide-ranging practice gives him an ability to grapple with complex and multi-disciplinary areas, including commercial judicial review and commercial litigation involving regulatory and sanctions issues. Tom acts as sole counsel in arbitration, the High Court and the Court of Appeal, as well as in larger counsel teams for heavy litigation, and is used to cross-examining factual and expert witnesses.

Significant recent instructions include:

- EuroChem v Société Générale & ING [2025] EWHC 1614 (Comm): successfully representing Tecnimont in a four-week trial of a claim by a Russian fertilizer company against a number of Banks for payment under on-demand Bonds relating to the development of an ammonia plant in Russia, giving rise to complex legal and factual issues as to ownership and control by the Russian billionaire Andrei Melnichenko, who is designated under the EU sanctions regime (with Alan Maclean KC).
- R (CJSC Alfa Bank (Belarus)) v HM Treasury (AC-2024-LON-001978): representing a Belarussian bank in an application under s.38 of SAMLA to review a decision by OFSI refusing a licence application under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 that would allow the bank to return funds to non-designated customers (with Jonathan Crow KC)
- R (Liberty) v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2025] EWCA Civ 571: representing the Secretary of State for the Home Department in a high-profile challenge to protest regulations introduced through "Henry VIII" powers (with Sir James Eadie KC).
- PJSC National Bank Trust v Mints (CL-2020-000432): representing the former Chairman of the Management Board of Bank Otkritie, defending claims by two state-owned Russian banks concerning allegedly harmful refinancing transactions involving the O1 Group and for the Mints Family amounting to US$600 million (with Tom Weisselberg KC).

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- Akhmedov de-designation (2025): acting for Farkhad Akhmedov in his successful application pursuant to s.23 of SAMLA for de-designation under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.
- Taxi Drivers v Uber (CL-2020-000252): representing over 13,000 black cab drivers in a high-value group action against Uber companies for an alleged unlawful means conspiracy whereby the Uber companies are said to have misled TfL as to the nature of its operations and business model to obtain a London PHVO licence (with Robert Howe KC).
- R (WASPI) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (AC-2024-LON-000811): representing WASPI in a high-profile judicial review of the government's decision to reject the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's findings that DWP maladministration in relation to communicating changes to the State Pension age for women led to injustice and recommendations as to compensation for the affected women (with Tom Hickman KC).
- R (Ismailov) v Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (AC-2024-LON-001978): representing the Foreign Secretary in a challenge under s.38 of SAMLA to a designation on the basis of family association under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, including resisting a disclosure application under CPR rr. 79.11(5) and 79.23 ([2025] EWHC 863 (Admin)) (with Jason Pobjoy KC).
- Secretary of State for Justice v Sneddon [2024] EWCA Civ 1258: successfully representing the Secretary of State in an appeal about the correct approach to be taken when departing from the advice of the Parole Board to the transfer prisoners to open conditions (with Sir James Eadie KC).

Tom is a member of the Attorney General's B Panel, the Welsh Government B Panel, and the AIAC's Panel of Arbitrators. He has worked as the Judicial Assistant to Lord Mance at the Supreme Court and as a Stipendiary Lecturer in Constitutional Law in Oxford.

EXPERIENCE

Commercial

Tom has considerable experience of commercial litigation, and is recognised in Legal 500 as a leading junior in commercial litigation and civil fraud.

Tom is also particularly known for his expertise in international arbitration, including investment treaty disputes. He has appeared as sole and junior counsel in arbitrations in London and internationally, including Singapore and Malaysia.

Cases

EuroChem v Société Générale & ING

[2025] EWHC 1614 (Comm)

Successfully representing Tecnimont in a four-week trial of a claim by a Russian fertilizer company against a number of Banks for payment under on-demand Bonds relating to the development of an ammonia plant in Russia, giving rise to complex legal and factual issues as to ownership and control by the Russian billionaire Andrei Melnichenko, who is designated under the EU sanctions regime (with Alan Maclean KC).

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VTB Capital Plc (in administration) v Zurich Insurance Europe AG and ors

BL-2025-000355

Acting for two insurers in a US$20m+ dispute as to whether an OFAC licence is required for payments under compromise agreements to be made to a subsidiary of VTB Bank PJSC, which is subject to US sanctions (with Brian Kennelly KC).

Taxi Drivers v Uber

CL-2024-000252

Representing over 13,000 black cab drivers in a high-value group action against Uber companies for an alleged unlawful means conspiracy whereby the Uber companies are said to have misled TfL as to the nature of its operations and business model to obtain a London PHVO licence (with Robert Howe KC).

ICC Arbitration

2025

Acting for a cryptocurrency trading platform in a claim concerning a US$3.5m. cryptocurrency transaction fraud, giving rise to trust, debt and breach of contract claims against a payment services provider.

PJSC National Bank Trust v Boris Mints & ors

CL-2020-000432

Representing the former Chairman of the Management Board of Bank Otkritie, defending claims by two state-owned Russian banks concerning allegedly harmful refinancing transactions involving the O1 Group and for the Mints Family amounting to US$600 million (with Tom Weisselberg KC).

Perform Content Ltd v Shanghai Nana Technology Co Ltd

CL-2024-000210

Representing a leading supplier of sports data in a claim in a US$6.9m. debt and/or damages claim under a partnership agreement with a Chinese company, giving rise to issues of alleged misrepresentation, recission, termination for repudiatory breach and affirmation.

Cayman Trust v X and Y

2025, Cayman Arbitration

Acting for a Cayman Islands Trust in an arbitral claim for payment under promissory notes issued by the respondents (with Robert Weekes KC).

Digital Marketing Company v Class Action Law Firm

2025

Acting for a digital marketing company in a debt claim under a marketing agreement that gives rise to potential regulatory issues under FSMA 2000 and the Regulated Activities Order 2001 relating to claims management activities.

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A v B

BL-2023-001425

Acting for an HNWI in an unlawful means conspiracy claim against an financial services company, arising from an investment visa scheme.

A v B

Commercial Court, 2023

Representing clients in an urgent injunction application under s.44 of the Arbitration Act 1996 to restrain Russian proceedings pursued in breach of an arbitration agreement and aimed at frustrating an order of an emergency arbitrator (with Andrew George KC).

WIPO Arbitration

2023

Acting for a biotech company in an IP dispute relating to COVID-19 vaccines (with Michael Bloch KC).

Company X v Mining Company

2022

Acting for the vendors of shares in companies holding copper and nickel assets in South America, in a dispute with a mining company following the purported termination of two SPAs (with Andrew Green KC and Andrew Scott KC).

LLC Eurochem North-West-2 v Tecnimont SpA

[2023] EWCA Civ 688

Acting in an appeal against a finding of breach of an anti-suit injunction. The appeal raised issues as to the proper construction of court orders and the scope of arbitration clauses (with Alan Maclean KC).

LNG Supplier v State Gas Company

2022

Acting for a State Gas Company in a dispute with its supplier under a long-term LNG Sale and Purchase Contract, arising from a supply failure and Russian restrictions on gas exports.

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy v Former Directors of Carillion

Chancery Division, 2022

Acting for a former director of Carillion in widely reported director disqualification proceedings relating to that firm's collapse (with Andrew George QC).

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Company v International Sports Organisation

Commercial Court, 2022

Acting in a commercial dispute between a major international sports organisation and its joint venture partner (with Tom Hickman KC).

Advising a Ukrainian Fund

2022

Advising a Ukrainian Fund as to the forum conveniens implications of the war in Ukraine.

Global Financing Company v Trader

2022

Acting for a global financing company faced with an application for an anti-suit injunction to restrain insolvency proceedings in Singapore said to have been commenced in breach of an arbitration clause (with Tony Peto KC).

Property Management Dispute

2022

Acting for a businessman and investor in a dispute between commercial partners relating to the acquisition and management of foreign property portfolios.

Property Developer v Business Partner

2022

Acting for a property developer in a dispute with its business partner about the existence and effect of a profit share agreement.

Premier League Footballer v Agent

2021

Acting for an agent in a multi-million pound arbitration dispute with a Premier League Footballer under Rule K, concerning agency services and the exploitation of image rights (with Nick De Marco KC).

ICC Arbitration

2020-21

US$1.6bn arbitration relating to allegations of conspiracy and breaches of a joint venture agreement for the construction and operation of a grain terminal.

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Company X v Mr A

2019-20

Acting for an investment company to obtain WFOs and ancillary relief (including disclosure, enforcement abroad, cross-examination, and the issue of a bench warrant) in support of UAE proceedings against an Iranian businessman.

Jaya Sudhir A/L Jayaram v (1) Tong Seak Kan; (2) Kensington Park Holdings Ltd

2019-20

Acted in an appeal to the Singapore Court of Appeal against a US$8m+ judgment concerning a natural gas development (with local counsel).

Company X v Company Y

2019

Acted for the buyers in an appeal under section 69 of the Arbitration Act 1996 concerning a US$9m+ award under a framework agreement for the construction of a self-elevating lift boat.

Football Club v Sponsor

2019

Acted for an international telecommunications company in an ICC arbitration (US$7m+) concerning a sponsorship dispute with a Premier League football club.

MJC Ltd v Metro Bank

2019

Sole counsel for the successful bank in resisting a claim that it owed a duty of care to protect a non-customer against authorised push payment fraud. The case raised important issues about the extent of the common law obligations of retail banks to fraud victims and issues of unjust enrichment.

Skymist Holdings Ltd v Grandlane Developments

2019

Acted for the company of a Russian oligarch in a construction dispute over a mansion development project, including applications for pre-action disclosure and resisting enforcement of an adjudication decision on the basis of suspected fraud.

Supplier v Coal Trader

2019

Acted for a supplier of Indonesian thermal coal against a South Korean coal trader in a SIAC arbitration (US$6m+) following the buyer's refusal to take further shipments under a nine-month supply contract.

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'Waterfall III' litigation

[2017] EWHC 2032 (Ch)

Acting as junior counsel in the Waterfall III litigation, arising from an application for directions in the Lehman Brothers insolvency and raising issues of contributory rights, fiduciary duties and recharge liabilities.

Liquidation Claim

Acting for Joint Liquidators in a £7m+ claim against a co-surety under a facility agreement and a guarantee and indemnity.

Representing a Romanian Bank

Enforcement proceedings for a Romanian bank following complex international frauds amounting to US$133m+.

Supporting UAE Proceedings

Acting for an investment company to obtain WFOs and ancillary relief (including disclosure, enforcement abroad, cross-examination, and the issue of a bench warrant) in support of UAE proceedings against an Iranian businessman

Arbitration

A leading junior, Tom is particularly known for his expertise in heavy and lengthy international arbitrations, including investment treaty disputes. He has appeared as sole and junior counsel in arbitrations in London and internationally, including in Singapore and Malaysia. He has extensive experience of arbitral appeals and of the LCIA, ICC, SIAC, UNCITRAL, AIAC, HKIAC, LMAA and GAFTA rules.

Tom was appointed to the AIAC's Panel of Arbitrators in 2021.

Cases

Cayman Trust v X and Y

2025, Cayman Arbitration

Acting for a Cayman Islands Trust in an arbitral claim for payment under promissory notes issued by the respondents (with Robert Weekes KC).

ICC Arbitration

2025

Acting for a cryptocurrency trading platform in a claim concerning a US$3.5m. cryptocurrency transaction fraud, giving rise to trust, debt and breach of contract claims against a payment services provider.

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A v B

Commercial Court, 2023

Representing clients in an urgent injunction application under s.44 of the Arbitration Act 1996 to restrain Russian proceedings pursued in breach of an arbitration agreement and aimed at frustrating an order of an emergency arbitrator (with Andrew George KC).

WIPO Arbitration

2023

Acting for a biotech company in an IP dispute relating to COVID-19 vaccines (with Michael Bloch KC).

LLC Eurochem North-West-2 v Tecnimont SpA

[2023] EWCA Civ 688

Acting in an appeal against a finding of breach of an anti-suit injunction. The appeal raised issues as to the proper construction of court orders and the scope of arbitration clauses (with Alan Maclean KC).

LNG Supplier v State Gas Company

2022

Acting for a State Gas Company in a dispute with its supplier under a long-term LNG Sale and Purchase Contract, arising from a supply failure and Russian restrictions on gas exports.

Investment arbitration

2022

Acting for an investor in relation to investor-state arbitration claims following State interference with marble quarrying rights and interests.

Global Financing Company v Trader

2022

Acting for a global financing company faced with an application for an anti-suit injunction to restrain insolvency proceedings in Singapore said to have been commenced in breach of an arbitration clause (with Tony Peto KC).

Premier League Footballer v Agent

2021

Acting for an agent in a multi-million pound arbitration dispute with a Premier League Footballer under Rule K, concerning agency services and the exploitation of image rights (with Nick De Marco KC).

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ICC Arbitration

2020-21

US$1.6bn arbitration relating to allegations of conspiracy and breaches of a joint venture agreement for the construction and operation of a grain terminal.

Buyers v Yard

2019-20

Acting for the buyers in a six-week LMAA arbitration (US$380m+) following the termination of a construction contract for a semi-submersible drilling rig.

ICC Arbitration

Acting for an international telecommunications company in an ICC arbitration (US$7m+) concerning a sponsorship dispute with a leading Premier League football club.

Owners v Charterers

2019-20

Sole counsel for the successful Owners in an LMAA arbitration concerning cancellation of a voyage under the COA following a fire at an ethylene plant.

Company X v Company Y

2019

Acted for the buyers in an appeal under section 69 of the Arbitration Act 1996 concerning a US$9m+ award under a framework agreement for the construction of a self-elevating lift boat.

Investor-State Arbitration

Acting for developers in a six-week arbitration (US$200m+) against a Caribbean state for breach of a development agreement, expropriation of concessions, breaches of lease and defamation.

AIAC Arbitration

AIAC arbitration in Malaysia (RM37m+) concerning a dispute under a lump-sum FIDIC contract for earthworks.

UNCITRAL Arbitration

UNCITRAL Arbitration (US$300m+) under a drilling services contract.

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Commodities Arbitration

Sole counsel for sellers in a one-week (US$1m+) commodities arbitration in Singapore concerning complex issues of sub-agency and jurisdiction.

Football Club v Sponsor

2019

Acted for an international telecommunications company in an ICC arbitration (US$7m+) concerning a sponsorship dispute with a Premier League football club.

s.69 Appeal

Acting for the buyers in an appeal under section 69 of the Arbitration Act 1996 concerning a US$9m+ award under a framework agreement for the construction of a self-elevating lift boat.

SIAC Arbitration

Acting for a supplier of Indonesian thermal coal against a South Korean coal trader in a SIAC arbitration (US$6m+) following the buyer's refusal to take further shipments under a nine-month supply contract.

LMAA Arbitration

Sole counsel for the successful Owners in an LMAA arbitration concerning cancellation of a voyage under the COA following a fire at an ethylene plant.

Arbitration

Acting for owners in a six-week arbitration (US$7.5+) concerning damage to a chemical tanker following an explosion.

Civil Fraud, Asset Recovery & Injunctive Relief

Tom specialises in civil fraud, including injunctive relief, jurisdiction, recovery, receivership, issues of foreign law, corporate duties and insolvency. He is recognised as a leading junior in civil fraud by Legal 500 and has extensive experience working for corporate and individual clients in Russian, the Middle East, and offshore jurisdictions.

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Cases

Taxi Drivers v Uber

CL-2024-000252

Representing over 13,000 black cab drivers in a high-value group action against Uber companies for an alleged unlawful means conspiracy whereby the Uber companies are said to have misled TfL as to the nature of its operations and business model to obtain a London PHVO licence (with Robert Howe KC).

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PJSC National Bank Trust v Boris Mints & ors

CL-2020-000432

Representing the former Chairman of the Management Board of Bank Otkritie, defending claims by two state-owned Russian banks concerning allegedly harmful refinancing transactions involving the O1 Group and for the Mints Family amounting to US$600 million (with Tom Weisselberg KC).

Company X v Mr A

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Acting for an investment company to obtain WFOs and ancillary relief (including disclosure, enforcement abroad, cross-examination, and the issue of a bench warrant) in support of UAE proceedings against an Iranian businessman.

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MJC Ltd v Metro Bank

2019

Sole counsel for the successful bank in resisting a claim that it owed a duty of care to protect a non-customer against authorised push payment fraud. The case raised important issues about the extent of the common law obligations of retail banks to fraud victims and issues of unjust enrichment.

Skymist Holdings Ltd v Grandlane Developments

2019

Acted for the company of a Russian oligarch in a construction dispute over a mansion development project, including applications for pre-action disclosure and resisting enforcement of an adjudication decision on the basis of suspected fraud.

Representing a Romanian Bank

Enforcement proceedings for a Romanian bank following complex international frauds amounting to US$133m+.

Supporting UAE Proceedings

Acting for an investment company to obtain WFOs and ancillary relief (including disclosure, enforcement abroad, cross-examination, and the issue of a bench warrant) in support of UAE proceedings against an Iranian businessman

Public & Regulatory

Tom has taught Constitutional Law at Oxford and frequently acts, both led and unled, on wide-ranging public and regulatory matters, for companies in commercial judicial reviews, community groups, NGOs, government departments, pro bono organisations, and local authorities. He is recognised as a leading junior in public law by Legal 500.

He is a member of the Welsh Government B Panel of Junior Counsel (Public Law) and the Attorney General's B Panel.

"Tom is a highly intelligent and persuasive advocate. His client demeanour is excellent and he always provides the best service possible."

— LEGAL 500, 2026

Cases

R (WASPI) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

AC-2024-LON-000811

Representing WASPI in a high-profile judicial review of the government's decision to reject the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's findings that DWP maladministration in relation to communicating changes to the State Pension age for women led to injustice and recommendations as to compensation for the affected women (with Tom Hickman KC).

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R (CJSC Alfa Bank (Belarus)) v HM Treasury

AC-2024-LON-001978

Representing a Belarussian bank in an application under s.38 of SAMLA to review a decision by OFSI refusing a licence application on the "extraordinary situation" ground under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 that would allow the bank to return funds to non-designated customers (with Jonathan Crow KC).

Liberty v Secretary of State for the Home Department

[2025] EWCA Civ 571

Acting for the Secretary of State in a high-profile challenge to the vires of changes made pursuant to "Henry VIII" powers by the Public Order Act 1986 (Serious Disruption to the Life of the Community) Regulations 2023 to the meaning of "serious disruption to the life of the community" in the Public Order Act 1986 (led by Sir James Eadie KC).

R (Ismailov) v Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

AC-2024-LON-001978

Representing the Foreign Secretary in a challenge under s.38 of SAMLA to a designation on the basis of family association under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, including resisting a disclosure application under CPR rr. 79.11(5) and 79.23 ([2025] EWHC 863 (Admin)) (with Jason Pobjoy KC).

Damal After School Club Ltd v Ofsted

[2025] UKFTT 00280 (HSEC)

Representing Ofsted in successfully resisting an appeal against its decision to cancel the Appellant's voluntary registration as a provider of childcare on non-domestic premises.

R (Murcott) v Secretary of State for Justice

[2025] EWHC 706 (Admin)

Acting for the Secretary of State for Justice in a judicial review of a decision to maintain a prisoner's Category A status, giving rise to issues as to when an oral hearing is required as a matter of procedural fairness and as to the application of s.31(2A) and (2B) of the Senior Courts Act 1981.

Secretary of State for Justice v Sneddon

[2024] EWCA Civ 1258

Successfully representing the Secretary of State in an appeal about the appropriate standard of review for a decision not to follow a recommendation by the Parole Board to transfer prisoners to open conditions (led by Sir James Eadie KC).

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R (British Standards Institution) v RRR Manufacturing Pty Ltd

[2024] EWCA Civ 530

Acting for the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency in an appeal against interim relief in a commercial judicial review about product certification.

R (MN) v Secretary of State for Justice

[2024] EWHC 333 (Admin)

Acting for the Secretary of State in resisting permission for judicial review of a decision as to the nature of an Article 2 ECHR investigation into near suicide by a prisoner in custody.

R (Overton) v Secretary of State for Justice

[2023] EWHC 3071 (Admin)

Acting for the Secretary of State in a judicial review challenge to his decision not to transfer a prisoner to open conditions.

Acting for Ofgem

2023

Acting for Ofgem in a confidential matter relating to Capacity Market manipulation.

Advice to an unincorporated association

Advising an unincorporated association, to which ministerial powers have been delegated, on whether it is a public authority for the purposes of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the potential liaiblity of its members.

Woodford Investment Fund Advice

2023

Advising investors bringing claims against Link Fund Solutions Ltd in relation to its alleged failure to supervise Neil Woodford's fund and alleged breaches of the COLL Rules.

Women Against State Pension Inequality v Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Administrative Court, 2023

Acting for WASPI in challenging a PSHO report into injustices suffered by women as a result of maladministration by the DWP in communicating changed to the state pension age (with Tom Hickman KC).

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Advising in relation to the Publicity Code

Advising the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities as to the use of powers under s.4A of the Local Government Act 1986 in relation to a local authority publication said to be in breach of the 1986 Act and the publicity code.

Advising the FCA on a confidential matter

Advising the Financial Conduct Authority on aspects of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and the Regulated Activities Order (with Monica Carss-Frisk QC).

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy v Former Directors of Carillion

Chancery Division, 2022

Acting for a former director of Carillion in widely reported director disqualification proceedings relating to that firm's collapse (with Andrew George QC).

Unlawful detention advice

Advising on claims for unlawful detention and breach of Article 5, arising from immigration detention pending deportation and raising issues of torture and Rule 35 reports.

BT Pension Scheme Trustees & Other Pension Scheme Trustees v UK Statistics Authority and the Chancellor of the Exchequer

[2022] EWHC 2265 (Admin)

Acting for the Treasury and for the UK Statistics Authority in a challenge to the decision to change the calculation method for RPI brought on behalf of UK gilt holders (with Sir James Eadie KC, Tom Hickman KC, and David Lowe)

Afghanistan sanctions advice to NGOs

Advising international organisations operating in Afghanistan on the scope of the humanitarian assistance exception in the Afghanistan (Sanctions) (EU Exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2022

Manchester Airports Holdings Ltd v Secretary Of State For Transport

[2021] EWHC 2031 (Admin)

Commercial judicial review challenging the traffic light system for categorising countries for the purposes of the Covid-19 travel restrictions and seeking the publication of information explaining the basis for categorising countries as green, amber and red, including an A1P1 claim (with Tom Hickman KC).

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Advising an International Charity

Advising on the potential liability of an international charity to its institutional funders for potential fraud by its foreign partners.

Advising various NGOs

Advising various NGOs and community groups on the potential illegality of bank loans amounting to US$1.8b+ to State-backed African companies.

Article 6 advice

Advising the Welsh Ministers on the compliance of Heritage Partnership Agreement regulations with Article 6 ECHR.

R (ClientEarth) (No3)) v (1) Secretary of State for Environment, Food And Rural Affairs (2) The Secretary of State for Transport and (3) Welsh Ministers

[2018] EWHC 315 (Admin)

Representing the Welsh Ministers in successfully resisting an extended liberty to apply order which would have by-passed the normal permission stage for subsequent judicial reviews.

Public Inquiry

Acting for Latin American market traders at a public inquiry concerning a Compulsory Purchase Order pursuant to a controversial £60m+ redevelopment in Tottenham, raising issues of cultural, property and children's rights.

Acting for an international NGO

Drafting communications to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women concerning sexual violence in South Sudan.

Acting for an international NGO

In relation to on-going foreign proceedings arising out of the Bhopal gas disaster in India in 1984.

Asylum Appeal

Acting for the Secretary of State in a statutory appeal by an Indian national to the First-Tier Tribunal under s 82(1) Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, concerning Articles 3, 6 and 8 ECHR and asylum.

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Harbour Authority Powers

Advising a company and local council as to a harbour authority's powers, under the Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847 and other legislation, to restrict the installation of a recreational zip wire over the harbour area.

Contract Dispute

Advising a health and social care company about a dispute under two-subcontracts for the provision of care services to London boroughs.

Financial Services & Banking

Tom has significant experience of financial services and banking disputes, including the judicial review of regulatory decisions, advising regulators, commercial proceedings, and sanctions issues.

Cases

Digital Marketing Company v Class Action Law Firm

2025

Acting for a digital marketing company in a debt claim under a marketing agreement that gives rise to potential regulatory issues under FSMA 2000 and the Regulated Activities Order 2001 relating to claims management activities.

Woodford Investment Fund Advice

2023

Advising investors bringing claims against Link Fund Solutions Ltd in relation to its alleged failure to supervise Neil Woodford's fund and alleged breaches of the COLL Rules.

Advising the FCA on a confidential matter

Advising the Financial Conduct Authority on aspects of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and the Regulated Activities Order (with Monica Carss-Frisk QC).

PJSC National Bank Trust v Boris Mints & ors

CL-2020-000432

Representing the former Chairman of the Management Board of Bank Otkritie, defending claims by two state-owned Russian banks concerning allegedly harmful refinancing transactions involving the O1 Group and for the Mints Family amounting to US$600 million (with Tom Weisselberg KC).

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Advising on the sanctions test of "domicile"

Advising a financial markets body on the meaning and scope of the words "domiciled in Russia" in Regulation 19A of the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, to assist with determining which entities are "connected with Russia".

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy v Former Directors of Carillion

Chancery Division, 2022

Acting for a former director of Carillion in widely reported director disqualification proceedings relating to that firm's collapse (with Andrew George QC).

EuroChem v Société Générale & ING

[2025] EWHC 1614 (Comm)

Successfully representing Tecnimont in a four-week trial of a claim by a Russian fertilizer company against a number of Banks for payment under on-demand Bonds relating to the development of an ammonia plant in Russia, giving rise to complex legal and factual issues as to ownership and control by the Russian billionaire Andrei Melnichenko, who is designated under the EU sanctions regime (with Alan Maclean KC).

Advising a Ukrainian Fund

2022

Advising a Ukrainian Fund as to the forum conveniens implications of the war in Ukraine.

Advice to Cayman Islands Trust

Advising a Cayman Islands trust and its investment manager on the implications of a majority investor being designated for the purposes of the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulation 2019 and the Russia (Sanctions) (Overseas Territories) Order 2020, including as to obtaining licences for redemption payments and ongoing asset management (with Jason Pobjoy).

Advising a Jersey Trust

Advising a Jersey Trust as to the implications of restrictions on investments in relation to Russia and the provisions of professional and business services to persons connected with Russia.

MJC Ltd v Metro Bank

2019

Sole counsel for the successful bank in resisting a claim that it owed a duty of care to protect a non-customer against authorised push payment fraud. The case raised important issues about the extent of the common law obligations of retail banks to fraud victims and issues of unjust enrichment.

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Representing a Romanian Bank

Enforcement proceedings for a Romanian bank following complex international frauds amounting to US$133m+.

Sanctions

Tom advises clients on a wide-range of UK and EU sanctions-related disputes (including asset-freeze and trade prohibitions) and has spent time working with the sanctions teams of large city law-firms. He is recognised as a leading junior in sanctions by Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners.

He has particular experience of section 38 challenges (both for and against the government), and advising clients on the implications of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018, the regulations for Afghanistan, Myanmar, Yemen, Belarus, and Russia, sanctions against Al-Qaida, the application of UK sanctions in off-shore jurisdictions, and the UK's Magnitsky sanction regime.

"Tom Leary is an excellent barrister. He is very thorough and detail-orientated without losing track of the big picture. He is able to provide advice quickly and effectively."

— CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS, 2026

Cases

Section 23 de-designation application

2025

Acting for a Chinese drone manufacturer in an application for de-designation under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

R (CJSC Alfa Bank (Belarus)) v HM Treasury

AC-2024-LON-001978

Representing a Belarussian bank in an application under s.38 of SAMLA to review a decision by OFSI refusing a licence application on the "extraordinary situation" ground under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 that would allow the bank to return funds to non-designated customers (with Jonathan Crow KC).

Akhmedov de-designation

2025

Acting for Farkhad Akhmedov in his successful application pursuant to s.23 of SAMLA for de-designation under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

R (Ismailov) v Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

AC-2024-LON-001978

Representing the Foreign Secretary in a challenge under s.38 of SAMLA to a designation on the basis of family association under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, including resisting a disclosure application under CPR rr. 79.11(5) and 79.23 ([2025] EWHC 863 (Admin)) (with Jason Pobjoy KC).

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VTB Capital Plc (in administration) v Zurich Insurance Europe AG and ors

BL-2025-000355

Acting for two insurers in a US$20m+ dispute as to whether an OFAC licence is required for payments under compromise agreements to be made to a subsidiary of VTB Bank PJSC, which is subject to US sanctions (with Brian Kennelly KC).

EuroChem v Société Générale & ING

[2025] EWHC 1614 (Comm)

Successfully representing Tecnimont in a four-week trial of a claim by a Russian fertilizer company against a number of Banks for payment under on-demand Bonds relating to the development of an ammonia plant in Russia, giving rise to complex legal and factual issues as to ownership and control by the Russian billionaire Andrei Melnichenko, who is designated under the EU sanctions regime (with Alan Maclean KC).

Advice to the National Crime Agency

2024

Advising the National Crime Agency on the EU Blocking Regulations and possible proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (External Requests and Orders) Order 2005.

De-designation Request

2024

Assisting with a de-designation request by a businessman under the Russia Regulations 2019.

X v Department for Transport

2023

Acting for the Department for Transport in defending claims for misfeasance in public office arising from the detention of aircraft prior to the designation of their ultimate owner under the Russia Regulations 2019.

Section 38 Challenge

2025

Acting for an energy trading company to challenge a designation decision that it was involved in the "Russian energy sector".

Section 38 Challenge

2025

Acting for an investment company in challenging the refusal of a licence application.

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Mazepin v SSFCA

2023

Acting for the Foreign Office in the one of the first court review challenges to a UK decision to sanction an individual.

PJSC National Bank Trust v Mints & ors

[2023] EWHC 118 (Comm)

Acting for the sixth defendant in relation to stay applications concerning the effect of UK sanctions on the ability of a sanctioned person to pursue litigation before the English courts, including whether the court is permitted to enter judgment in favour of a sanctioned person and whether the provision and payment of security for costs is licensable by OFSI.

Advice on Myanmar sanctions

Advising lenders, in relation to constructions projects in Myanmar, on the impact of UK and EU sanctions on various borrower guarantees.

Advising on the sanctions test of "domicile"

Advising a financial markets body on the meaning and scope of the words "domiciled in Russia" in Regulation 19A of the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, to assist with determining which entities are "connected with Russia".

Advice on Yemen sanctions

Advising international organisations operating in Yemen on the scope and implications of the Yemen (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020

Advice to Cayman Islands Trust

Advising a Cayman Islands trust and its investment manager on the implications of a majority investor being designated for the purposes of the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulation 2019 and the Russia (Sanctions) (Overseas Territories) Order 2020, including as to obtaining licences for redemption payments and ongoing asset management (with Jason Pobjoy).

Advice to OFSI

Advising OFSI in relation to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida (United Nations Sanctions) EU Exit Regulations 2019

Advising a Jersey Trust

Advising a Jersey Trust as to the implications of restrictions on investments in relation to Russia and the provisions of professional and business services to persons connected with Russia.

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Advising on the UK's Magnitsky sanctions regime

Advising a global anti-corruption NGO on the application of the UK's Magnitsky sanctions regime

Russian sanctions advice to a commercial process agent

Advising a commercial process agent on the implications of asset-freeze and trade prohibitions in the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 on its business with Russian clients.

Russian sanctions advice to bond trustee

Advising a bond trustee on the impact of Regulation 18A of the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 for its duties under a trust deed and as to how the OFSI imposes and calculates monetary penalties.

Russian sanctions advice to space technology company

Advising a space technology company on the implications of the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 for various joint venture, SPA, technology licence, and IP transfer proposals.

Russian sanctions advice to syndicate of lenders

Advising a syndicate of international lenders under export finance facilities as to the impact of Russian sanctions.

Sanctions advice to Guernsey trustees

Advising Guernsey trustees on the Russian sanctions implications of potential dealing with American Depositary Receipts representing shares in Russian companies.

Sanctions advice to wine business

Advising a global wine merchant on the impact of Russian sanctions on payments to bank accounts held with banks subject to asset freezes.

Afghanistan sanctions advice to NGOs

Advising international organisations operating in Afghanistan on the scope of the humanitarian assistance exception in the Afghanistan (Sanctions) (EU Exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2022

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Civil Liberties & Human Rights

Tom has significant experience of human rights disputes, from commercial judicial reviews raising A1P1 claims to immigration detention disputes. He has advised international organisations and accepts pro bono instructions.

Cases

Liberty v Secretary of State for the Home Department

[2025] EWCA Civ 571

Acting for the Secretary of State in a high-profile challenge to the vires of changes made pursuant to "Henry VIII" powers by the Public Order Act 1986 (Serious Disruption to the Life of the Community) Regulations 2023 to the meaning of "serious disruption to the life of the community" in the Public Order Act 1986 (led by Sir James Eadie KC).

R (MN) v Secretary of State for Justice

[2024] EWHC 333 (Admin)

Acting for the Secretary of State in resisting permission for judicial review of a decision as to the nature of an Article 2 ECHR investigation into near suicide by a prisoner in custody.

Advice to an unincorporated association

Advising an unincorporated association, to which ministerial powers have been delegated, on whether it is a public authority for the purposes of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the potential liaiblity of its members.

Article 6 advice

Advising the Welsh Ministers on the compliance of Heritage Partnership Agreement regulations with Article 6 ECHR.

Asylum Appeal

Acting for the Secretary of State in a statutory appeal by an Indian national to the First-Tier Tribunal under s 82(1) Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, concerning Articles 3, 6 and 8 ECHR and asylum.

Manchester Airports Holdings Ltd v Secretary Of State For Transport

[2021] EWHC 2031 (Admin)

Commercial judicial review challenging the traffic light system for categorising countries for the purposes of the Covid-19 travel restrictions and seeking the publication of information explaining the basis for categorising countries as green, amber and red, including an A1P1 claim (with Tom Hickman KC).

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Public Inquiry

Acting for Latin American market traders at a public inquiry concerning a Compulsory Purchase Order pursuant to a controversial £60m+ redevelopment in Tottenham, raising issues of cultural, property and children's rights.

Unlawful detention advice

Advising on claims for unlawful detention and breach of Article 5, arising from immigration detention pending deportation and raising issues of torture and Rule 35 reports.

Public International Law

Tom acts for clients across various areas of public international law, including investor-state disputes and human rights cases.

Cases

Advice to OFSI

Advising OFSI in relation to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida (United Nations Sanctions) EU Exit Regulations 2019

Investment arbitration

2022

Acting for an investor in relation to investor-state arbitration claims following State interference with marble quarrying rights and interests.

Treaty for the Establishment of the African Medicines Agency

Advising an international organisation on the impact of the Treaty for the Establishment of the African Medicines Agency, and the extent to which it bolsters national regulatory agencies.

Acting for an international NGO

Drafting communications to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women concerning sexual violence in South Sudan.

Acting for an international NGO

In relation to on-going foreign proceedings arising out of the Bhopal gas disaster in India in 1984.

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Investor-State Arbitration

Acting for developers in a six-week arbitration (US$200m+) against a Caribbean state for breach of a development agreement, expropriation of concessions, breaches of lease and defamation.

Public Inquiry

Acting for Latin American market traders at a public inquiry concerning a Compulsory Purchase Order pursuant to a controversial £60m+ redevelopment in Tottenham, raising issues of cultural, property and children's rights.

Sport

Tom acts for clubs, sporting bodies, players, regulators, managers, agents and sponsors in a wide range of agency, sponsorship, and other contractual or commercial disputes.

Cases

Perform Content Ltd v Shanghai Nana Technology Co Ltd

CL-2024-000210

Representing a leading supplier of sports data in a claim in a US$6.9m. debt and/or damages claim under a partnership agreement with a Chinese company, giving rise to issues of alleged misrepresentation, recission, termination for repudiatory breach and affirmation.

The Premier League v Nottingham Forest FC

FA Appeal Board, May 2024

Acting for Nottingham Forest FC in relation to a breach of the Premier League's Profitability and Sustainability Rules (PSRs) for the period ending Season 2022/23 (led by Nick De Marco KC).

Advice to a professional boxer

2023

Advising a professional boxer on the meaning and effect of an exclusive promotional agreement.

Selection Panel Appeals

2022

Acting for UK Athletics in various selection appeal proceedings regarding the Olympic World Class Programme.

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Company v International Sports Organisation

Commercial Court, 2022

Acting in a commercial dispute between a major international sports organisation and its joint venture partner (with Tom Hickman KC).

Premier League Football Club v The Football Association Premier League Ltd

2022

Acting for a Premier League club in a Rule X arbitration concerning an application to register an international player (with Nick De Marco KC).

Advice to sports body

2022

Advising a sports body as to the scope of its discretion in apply its rules and insolvency policy.

The FA v Football Club

2022

Acting for the FA in a sanctions appeal before the Independent Tribunal, brought by a football club under the FA Women's Competition Rules against a points deduction following an insolvency event said to have been caused by force majeure (including the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit).

Manager v Football Club

2022

Acting for a Premier League Football Club in a dispute before the Managers' Arbitration Tribunal over entitlement to termination fees (with Nick De Marco KC)

Football Club v Sponsor

2019

Acted for an international telecommunications company in an ICC arbitration (US$7m+) concerning a sponsorship dispute with a Premier League football club.

Premier League Footballer v Agent

2021

Acting for an agent in a multi-million pound arbitration dispute with a Premier League Footballer under Rule K, concerning agency services and the exploitation of image rights (with Nick De Marco KC).

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ACHIEVEMENTS

Education

- MA (Oxon) Law with Law Studies in Europe
- Erasmus Year, European and Public International Law (Leiden)
- LLM (Toronto)
- Certificate in International Investment Law and Dispute Resolution (BIICL)
- International Law Summer Programme (Hague Academy)

Publications

- 'Sanctions defences after Celestial Aviation: when does s 44 of SAMLA 2018 help?' (2024) 10 Butterworths Journal of International Banking & Financial Law 665.
- 'Regulation 7(4): When is an Entity "Controlled" by a Sanctioned Person?' (2023) 11 Butterworths Journal of International Banking & Financial Law 742.
- 'There are Known Unknowns: How Strict is Civil Liability for Breaches of Sanctions?' (2022) 10 Butterworths Journal of International Banking & Financial Law 651.
- ‘Access to justice in the 21st century: how can it be maximised?’, winner of the Jonathan Brock Memorial Essay Competition (Runner-Up) Prize 2017.
- ‘Non-Disputing Parties and Human Rights in Investor-State Arbitration: Bernhard von Pezold v Republic of Zimbabwe (case comment) (2017) 18(5–6) Journal of World Investment & Trade 1062.

Appointments

- COMBAR India Committee
- Stipendiary Lecturer, teaching Constitutional Law at Christ Church, Oxford
- AIAC (Asian International Arbitration Centre) Panel of Arbitrators
- Welsh Government's B Panel of Counsel
- Attorney General's B Panel of Counsel
- COMBAR Working Group on the Law Commission's Consultation Paper on the Arbitration Act 1996

Academic Awards

- Jonathan Brock Memorial Essay Competition (Runner-Up) Prize
- Walter Wigglesworth Scholarship, Lincoln’s Inn
- Canadian Rhodes Scholars Foundation Scholarship
- Lord Mansfield Scholarship, Lincoln’s Inn
- Hardwicke Entrance Scholarship, Lincoln’s Inn
- John V Lovitt Prize for Jurisprudence, Christ Church, University of Oxford
- Lovells Scholarship, Christ Church, University of Oxford
- Slaughter and May Prize for Constitutional Law, University of Oxford

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Barristers regulated by the Bar Standards Board

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