



Paolo Busco, LL.M PhD

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PROFILE

I am a lawyer qualified in Italy and, as a *barrister*, at the Bar of England and Wales. I practise from Twenty Essex Chambers in London, one of the world's preeminent sets in international law.

I specialise in public international law and international dispute resolution, with a particular focus on the intersection between **international law and diplomacy**. My practice encompasses the law of the sea, State immunities, national and international security law, and international investment protection.

During my career, I have advised senior government officials, including **Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Interior in Italy and the Middle East**, across the full spectrum of international law and relations.

I have appeared as counsel before the **International Court of Justice**, the **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea**, the **Court of Justice of the European Union**, ICSID arbitral tribunals, Annex VII UNCLOS tribunals, and various national courts. I also have substantial experience **in inter-State negotiations and mediations**, gained through advisory mandates in political and diplomatic disputes.

Prior to qualifying as a *barrister*, I practised international law in various capacities, including as **Senior Legal Adviser at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** in Riyadh and, previously, as **Assistant Legal Counsel at the Permanent Court of Arbitration** in The Hague. I completed my legal traineeship at the Office of the Attorney General in Rome.

I hold a law degree from **LUISS University in Rome (LLB)**, a master's degree in international law from the **University of Cambridge (LLM)**, a doctorate in law from the **Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne** and the **Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa (PhD)**, and a Graduate Diploma in Law from the **University of London (GDL) (BPP)**.

I am a member of the **UK Attorney General Panel for Public International Law** and am ranked in the leading legal directories for public international law (Band 3, Chambers UK and Chambers Global).

In 2024, I was appointed **Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic**, on the initiative of the President of the Republic.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Twenty Essex Chambers, London** **2017 – present**
 - *Barrister* at the Bar of England and Wales, member of the *Honourable Society of Middle Temple* (since 2021);
 - Registered European Lawyer at the Bar of England and Wales (2017–2021);
 - Member of the Rome Bar (since 2014);
 - Member of the *UK Attorney General Panel* for International Law (since 2026);
 - Ranked by Chambers & Partners (since 2022) and Legal 500 (since 2023) for public international law.
 - Principal advisory work (some details omitted for confidentiality):

- Advising a State in negotiations with another State concerning the release of detained individuals;
- Advising a sovereign mediator in a territorial dispute between two African States;
- Advising a sovereign mediator in a maritime delimitation dispute between two States;
- Advising a sovereign mediator in a dispute among three States concerning the construction and management of an energy infrastructure in Africa;
- Advising a European company in relation to a potential investment dispute;
- Advising a Middle Eastern company on submarine cables;
- Advising a State in relation to potential investment disputes;
- Advising a State on potential proceedings before the International Court of Justice concerning obligations of judicial cooperation in respect of certain categories of international crimes;
- Advising the Italian Republic (Ministry of the Interior) on questions of the law of the sea and international human rights law arising from migration flows from Africa;
- Advising the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture) on the law of the sea;
- Advising the United States of America (Department of Justice) on strategic questions of State immunity in civil proceedings in Italy;
- Advising a State on various questions of immunity from civil jurisdiction in the United Kingdom;
- Advising a State on the ratification of the United Nations Convention on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property.

- Principal contentious work:

Before the International Court of Justice:

- *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in Sudan* (Sudan v. United Arab Emirates), counsel for the United Arab Emirates;
- *Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change*, advisory opinion, counsel for the United Arab Emirates;
- *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, advisory opinion, counsel for the United Arab Emirates;
- *Questions of Jurisdictional Immunities of the State and Measures of Constraint against State-owned Property* (Germany v. Italy), provisional measures and merits, counsel for Italy;
- *Appeal Relating to the Jurisdiction of the ICAO Council under Article 84 of the Chicago Convention* (Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates v. Qatar), preliminary objections, counsel for the United Arab Emirates;
- *Appeal Relating to the Jurisdiction of the ICAO Council under Article II Section 2 of IASTA* (Bahrain, Egypt, United Arab Emirates v. Qatar), preliminary objections, counsel for the United Arab Emirates;
- *Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (United Arab Emirates v. Qatar), preliminary objections, counsel for the United Arab Emirates.

Before the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea / Annex VII UNCLOS Tribunals:

- *The MV “Heroic Idun” Case* (Marshall Islands v. Equatorial Guinea), Case No. 32, ITLOS Special Chamber, counsel for the Marshall Islands;
- *The MV “Heroic Idun” Case* (Marshall Islands v. Equatorial Guinea), Case No. 30, Prompt Release, ITLOS, counsel for the Marshall Islands;

- *The MV “Norstar” Case* (Panama v. Italy), Case No. 25, ITLOS, counsel for Italy;
- *The “Enrica Lexie” Incident* (Italy v. India), PCA Case 2015-28, Annex VII Tribunal, counsel for Italy;
- *The “Enrica Lexie” Incident* (Italy v. India), Case No. 24, ITLOS, counsel for Italy.

Before investment arbitration tribunals:

- FCL Ambiente v. Republic of North Macedonia, ICSID Case No. ARB/23/31, counsel for FCL Ambiente;
- Spentech Engineering Limited v. United Arab Emirates, ICSID Case No. ARB/24/16, counsel for the United Arab Emirates;
- Amir Masood Taheri v. United Arab Emirates, ICSID Case No. ARB/21/19, counsel for the United Arab Emirates;
- Impresa Pizzarotti SpA v. Kingdom of Morocco, ICSID Case No. ARB/19/14, counsel for Impresa Pizzarotti;
- Hela Schwarz GmbH v. People’s Republic of China, ICSID Case No. ARB/17/19, tribunal secretary;
- Qatar Airways Group Q.C.S.C. v. United Arab Emirates, counsel for the United Arab Emirates;
- Taishin International Bank v. Government of Taiwan, adviser to Taishin.

Before the European Court of Human Rights / Court of Justice of the European Union:

- Joined Cases C-428/24 and C-476/24 (EuroChem et al. v. Council and Commission), CJEU, counsel for Valla Yacht;
- Application No. 28522/23 (Granato v. France), ECtHR, counsel for the applicant;
- Application No. 32969/19 (Rackete v. Italy), ECtHR, adviser to Italy;
- Case C-396/18 (Cafaro v. DQ), CJEU, counsel for DQ.

Before other international bodies and dispute resolution mechanisms:

- Conciliation procedure under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Qatar v. United Arab Emirates), CERD Committee and Commission, counsel for the United Arab Emirates;
- Arbitration under Article 32 of the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union, PCA Case 2020-28, Permanent Court of Arbitration, counsel for the United Arab Emirates.
- Proceedings under Article 84 of the ICAO Convention (Qatar v. Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates), ICAO Council, counsel for the United Arab Emirates;
- Proceedings under Article II, Section 2, IASTA (Bahrain, Egypt, United Arab Emirates v. Qatar), ICAO Council, counsel for the United Arab Emirates.

Before national courts:

- Supreme v. United States of America, Court of Appeal and Supreme Court of The Hague, counsel for the United States;
- Various claimants v. United States of America, over 10 proceedings on State immunity in employment disputes, before various Italian courts, counsel for the United States.
- Various claimants v. United Arab Emirates or UAE State officials, over 15 proceedings on State immunity before courts in the United States, United Kingdom, France, Canada and Australia, counsel or adviser for the United Arab Emirates.

• **Office of the Prime Minister, Rome**

2026 – present

- External Adviser on international law.
- **Office of International Affairs, UAE Presidential Court, Abu Dhabi** **2022 – 2026**
 - Senior International Legal Adviser (from 2023);
 - International Legal Adviser (2022);
 - Led a team of seven international lawyers, advising across the full spectrum of international law;
 - Managed the UAE's international litigation portfolio.
 - Principal activities:
 - Advising on numerous policy matters concerning international law and national security;
 - Representing the UAE in two advisory proceedings (Climate Change, Gaza) and one contentious case (UAE v. Sudan) before the International Court of Justice;
 - Representing the UAE in two investment arbitrations before ICSID tribunals;
 - Managing State immunity litigation before domestic courts in various European countries, with a focus on intelligence and national security matters.
- **Office of the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Abu Dhabi** **2019 – 2022**
 - International Legal Adviser.
 - Principal activities:
 - Advising in the context of the UAE Presidency of the UN Security Council;
 - International litigation with the State of Qatar following the rupture of relations in 2017;
 - Advising on the Al Ula Agreement, aimed at the normalisation of relations with the State of Qatar in 2020;
 - Advising on the Abraham Accords between the UAE and Israel, establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries;
 - Mediating a political and territorial dispute, and a dispute concerning energy infrastructure in Africa.
- **UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Riyadh / Rome** **2017 – 2019**
 - Member of the Expert Roster, General Legal Affairs Section;
 - Senior Consultant at FAO in Riyadh on the law of the sea and international fisheries law.
- **Ministry of Home Affairs, Rome** **2017 – 2019**
 - Consultant on the law of the sea and international human rights law, with particular reference to migration flows in the Mediterranean.
- **Permanent Court of Arbitration, The Hague** **2013 – 2014**
 - Assistant Legal Counsel;
 - Legal and case management support in inter-State and investment arbitrations in which the PCA served as registry.
 - Principal arbitrations:
 - Atlantic-Scandinavian Herring Arbitration (Kingdom of Denmark, in respect of the Faroe Islands v. European Union), PCA Case 2013-30;

- Chagos Marine Protected Area Arbitration (Mauritius v. United Kingdom), PCA Case 2011-03;
 - Consta Joint Venture v. Chemin de Fer Djibouto-Ethiopien, PCA Case 2013-32;
 - Mattioli Joint Venture v. Ministry of Water and Energy on behalf of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, PCA Case 2013-33;
 - OAO Gazprom v. Republic of Lithuania, PCA Case 2011-16;
 - British Caribbean Bank Ltd. v. Government of Belize, PCA Case 2010-18;
- **Office of the Attorney General, Roma** **2010 – 2012**
 - Trainee lawyer at the Avvocatura Generale dello Stato (Italy Office of the Attorney General);
 - Assigned to the Deputy Advocate General;
 - Advisory work in public international law, EU law and international litigation.
 - Principal international activities:
 - Joined Cases C-402/05 P and C-415/05 P (Kadi and Others v. Council and Commission), Court of Justice of the European Union;
 - Claim No. HQ09X00180 (Italian Republic and Others v. Sotheby's), High Court of Justice of England and Wales.
 - The Victorious Youth (Lysippos) Case (Italian Republic v. J. Paul Getty Museum), various Italian courts.
 - International mediation between Italy, another European State and an international museum concerning disputed cultural property.
 - Diplomatic negotiations for the restitution of cultural property with the Princeton University Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.
 - Assistance in the preparation of criminal proceedings against a British art dealer for illicit trafficking in antiquities.
 - Advisory work and legal opinions on questions of EU law and international law for various Italian ministries and State bodies.
 - **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP, Roma** **2008 – 2009**
 - Intern (stagiaire) in the international arbitration department.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS – FELLOWSHIPS

- **Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.** **2018 – 2019**
 - Visiting Researcher at the Law Center, during doctoral studies.
- **University of Cambridge, Cambridge** **2015 – 2016**
 - Visiting Fellow at the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, during doctoral studies.
- **The Aspen Institute, Roma** **2014 – 2019**
 - Junior Fellow, International Affairs.

EDUCATION

- **BPP, Londra** **2021**
 - Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL), English law.

- **Università Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, Parigi** **2018**
 - PhD in international dispute resolution;
 - Department of International and Comparative Law;
 - *Mention très honorable avec félicitations du Jury.*
- **Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa** **2018**
 - Diploma di Perfezionamento / PhD in law;
 - Joint supervision with Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne.
- **University of Cambridge, Cambridge** **2011**
 - LLM in Public International Law (St Catharine's College).
- **Università Luiss Guido Carli, Roma** **2010**
 - Law degree (LLB equivalent), specialisation in international law;
 - Magna cum laude;
 - Gold medal for academic performance and special honour for the thesis.
- **Collegio Lamaro-Pozzani, Federazione Nazionale Cavalieri del Lavoro, Roma** **2010**
 - Diploma in Culture for Business;
 - Gold medal for academic performance.

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, conferred by *motu proprio* of the President of the Republic;
- Member of the Attorney General's Panel for International Law;
- Italian Society of International Law, Padovani Prize for the best thesis in international law;
- Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, borsa di dottorato triennale;
- Regione Marche, full scholarship for LLM;
- Federazione Nazionale dei Cavalieri del Lavoro / Collegio Lamaro Pozzani, full scholarship for five-year law degree.

PUBLICATIONS (selected)

- **Book Chapters**
 - What we talk about when we talk about procedural fairness (with F Fontanelli) in A Sarvarian, F Fontanelli, R Baker and V Tzevelekos (eds), *Procedural Fairness in International Courts and Tribunals*. BIICL: London, 2015, 17;
 - Thou shalt only partly judge! Jurisdictional review in the opinion of the intervening states in Kadi II, in M Avbely, F Fontanelli, G Martinico (eds) *Kadi on Trial: a Multi-faceted Analysis of the Kadi Proceedings before the CJEU*. Routledge: London, 2014, 33.
- **Journal Articles**
 - L'immunità dello Stato estero nelle controversie di lavoro: le Sezioni Unite alle prese con il diritto internazionale pattizio e consuetudinario (with F Fontanelli), in *Nuova giurisprudenza civile commentata*, 2022, 409;
 - The function of procedural justice in international adjudication (with F Fontanelli), in *The Law and Practice of International Courts and Tribunals*, 2016, 1;
 - Caveat emptor: pre-purchase due diligence duties of US merchants for transactions outside the temporal scope of the 1970 UNESCO Convention (with F Fontanelli), in *Transnational Dispute Management, Special Issue on Art and Heritage Disputes*, 2013, 34;

- Questioni di giurisdizione e immunità nella vicenda della Enrica Lexie, alla luce del diritto internazionale (with F Fontanelli), in *Diritto Penale Contemporaneo*, 2013, 399.
- **Online Blogs**
 - What's in a bag? The lawfulness of X-raying the diplomatic pouch in international law, *Just Security*, 14 August 2024;
 - Flag State responsibility in international human rights law for individuals on board private vessels, *EJIL: Talk!*, 1 May 2024;
 - Shunning conventional wisdom – Italian courts and State immunity in employment disputes, *EJIL: Talk!*, 28 December 2021;
 - Not all that glitters is gold: the Human Rights Committee's test for the extraterritorial application of the ICCPR in the context of search and rescue operations, *Opinio Juris*, 2 March 2021;
 - Another perspective on search & rescue in the Mediterranean Sea, *Opinio Juris*, 11 May 2020.
- **General Media**
 - Author of numerous articles in the *Corriere della Sera* on international law and international relations.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Italian (native), English (fluent).

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS (leading legal directories)

- **Legal 500 UK**
 - “Paolo is very bright and always considering innovative legal approaches. He has broad knowledge of public international law and is able to offer carefully considered strategic advice. Paolo has a knowledge and understanding of how to work with states well beyond what might be expected of a counsel of his years of call, he has an understanding of the needs of key stakeholders and the wider political implications of legal decision making” (2026);
 - “Paolo is a great team player. Thorough, creative, and easy to work with. He keeps the client's objectives in laser focus” (2025);
 - “Paolo is an extremely bright lawyer, a resourceful advocate, and an excellent scholar. He impresses with the width of his legal knowledge, spanning the whole spectrum of public international law – including, the law of the sea, jurisdictional immunities, human rights, humanitarian law, and general dispute resolution” (2024).
- **Chambers & Partners UK and Global**
 - “Paolo is incredibly hard-working, technically very sound, and personable” (2026);
 - “Paolo is really impressive. He really knows the law and straddles that with deep understanding of international relations and diplomacy” (2025);
 - “Paolo is an extremely user-friendly barrister. He's collaborative, very thorough and quite creative in thinking about solutions to problems” (2025);

- “Paolo Busco is a rare combination of solid international law competence and ability in international affairs. He has a proactive approach and a refined sense of strategy” (2024);
- “He’s stunningly good” (2023);
- “I’ve always been impressed by his initiative” (2023).