hailshamchambers

Clerks: **020 7643 5000**

Ian Chai

Call: 2018



Overview

Ian is a commercial barrister at Hailsham, having previously worked as part of the commercial disputes and class actions team at a leading London law firm.

His practice spans all aspects of commercial litigation and international arbitration. Ian is recommended in the Legal 500 as a "Key Lawyer" in Commercial Litigation, Group Litigation, and Civil Fraud, where he was described in the 2025 edition as "*a very effective litigator who is user friendly, knowledgeable and has a unique ability to cut through extremely complex and high-value matters to try and get the best result for the client*".

Ian's experience includes appearing unled in an application for urgent injunctive relief in respect of a judgment made in Los Angeles of $58 million being enforced against Ian's client by a freezing injunction of £12 million of assets in England and Wales.

He is currently instructed in the Russian Aircraft litigation (led by Alexander Hutton KC) on behalf of various reinsurer clients in defending claims with a combined quantum of over $8 billion.

Ian is also instructed (with Ian Clarke KC) by Sangeeta Mittal in a claim for constructive trust/estoppel against an asset valued at £35 million against receivers appointed by Barclays Bank PLC. In these proceedings, Ian has also appeared unled against a silk and junior team in various interlocutory applications.

Commercial Litigation / Civil Fraud

Ian has considerable experience of heavy commercial litigation matters, often with a civil fraud element and is used to working as part of a wider team.

Cases of note include:

- *The Russian Aircraft Litigation* – Operator Policy Claims (ongoing). The Claimants bring claims against Reinsurer Defendants, Russian Insurers and Russian Reinsurers in respect of alleged loss of aircraft with a total claim value of $11 billion following events in Russian and Ukraine since February 2022. Ian, led by Alexander Hutton KC is instructed by the HFW War Risk Defendants.
- *Kyrrex v Jones*. Ian appeared in the Court of Appeal, led by Brad Pomfret KC and Mark Lorrell in June 2026 concerning the test in CPR 40.9 and points of principle in the context of cryptocurrency claims on whether a party was "directly affected" by a decision of a cryptocurrency exchange to transfer Bitcoin from a particular wallet notwithstanding that the entity which received the Bitcoin had no claim to any Bitcoin in that wallet.
- *Nwikpo v TAP N Go*. Ian was led by Joshua Munro in a 5 day trial in November 2025 in a claim for breach of contract and misrepresentation concerning a cryptocurrency trading platform.
- *Upham & Ors v HSBC Bank Plc* [2024] EWHC 849 (Comm). Known also as the "Eclipse Litigation" and one of the Lawyer's top 20 cases, Ian was lead associate in a £1.3 billion class action fraud claim in the Commercial Court listed for a 10-week trial. Ian's work on Eclipse included drafting points of claim and witness evidence for individual sample claimants, input on the written and closing submissions as well as on cross examination alongside the counsel trial team.
- *FAP Art Management v Inigo Philbrick* [2022] EWHC 603 (QB). Ian was part of the instructing team in an application concerning various parties under CPR 85.5 dealing with European Orders for Payment totalling over €10 million contesting proprietary claims in various artworks (including those produced by Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat) subject to a wide-ranging fraud by Inigo Philbrick, an art dealer.
- *Kausar Raja v Terry McMillan* [2021] EWCA Civ 1103. Ian was part of the instructing team which ultimately led to an appeal in the Court of Appeal on issues of conspiracy, notably on the question of whether it was possible for a director to conspire with a company that is his alter ego.

Arbitration

Ian is experienced in arbitral matters including cases in the International Chamber of Commerce and the London Court of International Arbitration. In addition, he is also a member of the LCIA, ICC, and CiARB, and additionally has rights of audience in the AIFC Court.

Cases of note include:

- Ian is currently instructed in respect of a confidential arbitration concerning a Dubai entity dealing with allegations of fraud and forgery. Ian was also successful in obtaining an ex parte worldwide freezing injunction at the outset of the claim.
- *X v Y*. Ian was part of the instructing team acting in an ICC arbitration for a

Dubai based entity in an €8,000,000 dispute concerning issues of contractual interpretation.
- *Buheiry v Vistajet* [2022] EWHC 2998 (Comm) as junior counsel (led by Tim Higginson) on a challenge under s67 and s68 of the Arbitration Act 1996 to set aside an arbitral award.

Property Litigation

Ian is experienced in property litigation matters, which usually have a commercial aspect to them. These disputes primarily concern breaches of trust, fiduciary duty and estoppel.

Cases of note include:

- *Sangeeta Mittal v Barclays* (ongoing). Ian is instructed by Healys LLP on behalf of Sangeeta Mittal in a claim against Barclays Bank for constructive trust and estoppel. At the most recent hearing, Ian appeared unled against a silk and junior team in an interlocutory hearing to deal with several issues, including amendment of pleadings, joinder and service out of the jurisdiction.
- *Hamersley Invest Anstalt v Haynes* [2025] EWHC 432 (Ch) as junior counsel (led by Ian Clarke KC). Ian acted for Hamersley, a Liechtenstein entity, in two claims case managed together in the Chancery Division valued at £11 million and concerning issues of constructive trust, proprietary estoppel and international law, including expert evidence from Liechtenstein. At trial, Hamersley succeeded in its counterclaim and defence of the allegations brought by Ms Haynes.
- *Khan v Burke* [2023] EWHC 534 (Ch) 10 as counsel. The underlying claim raised issues of consent for a licence to alter. Ian successfully obtained (conditional) permission to appeal on an issue arising out of compliance with unless orders before Mr Justice Leech whose judgment commented on his persuasive oral submissions and concise and helpful skeleton argument.
- *X v Y*. Ian was part of the instructing team acting for the main Defendant in multi-party High Court litigation brought for £64 million, arising out of a purported breach of a Section 106 Agreement (of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that was alleged to be a sham/ineffective avoidance scheme.

Group Litigation / Class Actions

Ian’s previous experience at leading London law firm Edwin Coe’s Commercial Disputes and Class Actions team provides him with real insight and a practical understanding of group litigation. He has been involved from the inception of group action claims from funding proposals for projects with quantum ranging from £150 million to £1 billion to the end of trial. As such he understands keenly the commercial realities of dealing with funded claims for the key parties - the law firm,

funder and lay client.

Cases of note include:

- Trucks Cartel Litigation. Ian is currently instructed by Edwin Coe LLP in respect of expert reports on the issues of overcharge. Originally issued in the Chancery Division of the High Court, before being transferred to the Competition Appeal Tribunal, Ian was also part of the Edwin Coe trucks team who acted for over 125 claimants with a collective quantum of over £100,000,000. In particular, Ian assisted with taking witness evidence from various claimants as well as dealing with expert economic evidence.
- *Upham & Ors v HSBC Bank Plc* [2024] EWHC 849 (Comm). Known also as the "Eclipse Litigation" and one of the Lawyer's top 20 cases, Ian was lead associate in a £1.3 billion class action fraud claim in the Commercial Court listed for a 10 week trial. Ian's work on Eclipse included drafting points of claim and witness evidence for individual sample claimants, input on the written and closing submissions as well as on cross examination alongside the counsel trial team.
- *McGann & Others v the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police* (claim ongoing). Ian was part of the Edwin Coe team acting for the claimant group in a claim for misfeasance in public office arising out of the Hillsborough tragedy. Ian was involved in drafting witness evidence for all high value claims, which included assessing medical evidence and dealing with expert reports on psychiatric harm.

Insolvency

Ian has a growing insolvency practice and has experience in dealing with winding up / bankruptcy petitions and validation orders.

Education

LLM in Civil Litigation and Dispute Resolution (Distinction) at City Law School, including the City Law School Prize for best performance in class.

LLM Legal Practice Course (Commendation).

Classical Civilisation at Warwick University.

What others say

"Ian Chai is excellent. He is a very effective litigator who is user-friendly, knowledgeable, and has a unique ability to cut through extremely complex and high-

value matters to try and get the best result for the client.” *Legal 500, 2025*

"Ian Chai is responsive, collaborative and always looking to help the counsel and litigation team reach the best strategic outcome possible in the time available. He is a credit to his firm and a pleasure to work with." *Legal 500, 2025*

“Ian Chai - an enquiring mind, diligent, to the point, and effective” *Legal 500, 2024*

“Exceptional knowledge well beyond his PQE” *Legal 500, 2024*

“Associate Ian Chai provided valuable assistance with a very knotty company dispute. He worked tireless, and his diligence was helpful in ensuring the application was successful” *Legal 500, 2023*

Further information

ICO Data protection registration number: ZB908137

Ian Chai is a barrister regulated by the Bar Standards Board. Click to view Ian Chai’s Privacy Notice.

Ian is also a member of:

- the Commercial Bar Association;
- the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

He has also completed accredited mediator training with the Society of Mediators and attended the South Eastern Circuit’s course on Advanced International Advocacy at Keble College.