



Karnan Thirupathy

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Profile

Karnan is a Singapore-based disputes partner with more than 25 years' experience in Asia. He focuses on international arbitration and multi-jurisdictional disputes across the shipping, commodities and insurance sectors. Qualified in Singapore and England and Wales, and having practised in Asia for much of his career, he brings deep regional experience to disputes spanning multiple legal systems and commercial markets.

He acts for commodities traders, vessel owners and charterers, offshore energy contractors, P&I clubs and insurers. His work encompasses disputes arising from commodity sale and offtake agreements, contracts of affreightment, marine and trade credit insurance, shipping and commodities derivatives, trade and shipping-related fraud, sanctions compliance and related regulatory issues.

Alongside his work representing clients in international arbitration and related proceedings, Karnan also accepts appointments as arbitrator in shipping and trade disputes. This dual perspective informs a measured, tribunal-focused approach to addressing complex commercial and technical issues.

Karnan is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and a Senior Accredited Specialist in Maritime and Shipping Law with the Singapore Academy of Law. His standing in shipping, arbitration and insurance is recognised by Chambers Global, Chambers Asia-Pacific, The Legal 500 Asia Pacific, Best Lawyers, Doyle's Guide and Lexology Index.

Karnan's experience

- Acted for a leading global energy trader in obtaining an award for over USD 140 million against a state-owned energy company in an LCIA arbitration concerning an LNG supply dispute.
- Acted for a tanker owner and its insurers in obtaining a London arbitration award against the charterers and shippers of an oil cargo for losses arising from the carriage of suspected sanctioned cargo.
- **The “Miracle Hope”:** Acted for intermediate charterers in English Court proceedings in respect of claims under letters of indemnity which arose as a result of a cargo misdelivery in Singapore. The judgment prompted the International Group P&I Club's revisions to the standard LOI wording.
- **“Budget 11” / “Budget 21”:** Advising vessel owners and their insurers on the defence of claims brought by cargo owners for losses that had occurred when the vessels sailed into a tropical storm en route to Penang, Malaysia.
- Represented charterers in related arbitration and court proceedings in London, Singapore, Mauritius, Indonesia and the US, arising from an Indonesian nickel ore cargo and the vessel's 15-month detention following government export restrictions.
- Advised a leading producer and exporter of oleochemicals and biofuels on internal sanctions compliance procedures and responses to transaction-specific regulatory investigations.
- **“Oriental Dragon”:** Advising MLC insurers of a cruise ship on the arrest and sale of the vessel; and compensation and repatriation of 200 crew members following the owners' abandonment of the vessel in Malaysia during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Professional background

Qualifications

- LLB, National University of Singapore, 2001
- LLM (Maritime Law), University of Oslo, 2006
- Diploma in Maritime Accident Investigations, North Kent College, 2017

Admissions

- Advocate & Solicitor, Singapore, 2002
- Solicitor, England & Wales, 2008

Special qualifications

- Fellow, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, 2017
- Senior Accredited Specialist in Shipping & Maritime Law, Singapore Academy of Law, 2020
- Singapore Chamber of Maritime Arbitrators, Panel Arbitrator

Industry recognition

- Chambers Asia-Pacific and Chambers Global, Ranked International Shipping Lawyer
- Legal 500, Recommended Shipping Lawyer
- Lexology Index, Recommended Shipping Lawyer
- Doyle's Guide, Leading Transport Lawyer
- Best Lawyers, Recommended (1) Arbitration and Mediation, (2) Litigation, (3) Insurance Law, (4) Shipping and Maritime Law