

Singapore International Arbitration Centre Launches its First Representative Office in the United States

Litigation and Dispute Resolution





On Dec. 2, 2020, the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) launched its first representative office in the United States in New York City. The new SIAC office will benefit US-based arbitration parties, who rank among the top five users of SIAC. In choosing arbitration to

resolve commercial disputes, parties can select a neutral and confidential forum and avoid being hauled into protracted litigation in an inhospitable foreign court. International arbitral awards obtained through SIAC arbitration are enforceable in more than 160 jurisdictions worldwide.

SIAC is becoming increasingly popular among users. According to a 2018 Queen Mary University of London International Arbitration Survey, SIAC ranked in the top three arbitral institutions in the world. Singapore was ranked as one of the top arbitral seats in Asia. SIAC benefits from Singapore's long-established rule of law, a common law system based on English law and procedure, and proximity and cultural affinity to China and Southeast Asia.

SIAC continues to be a preferred forum even during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of new cases before SIAC is on course to top one thousand in 2020, exceeding the numbers registered in previous years. With SIAC's arrival in New York, US corporate counsel and arbitration users will have a geographically closer SIAC representative office and contact base in the United States.

SIAC arbitration rules are designed to make arbitral proceedings efficient, cost-effective, and flexible for parties from civil and common law traditions. Under SIAC's arbitration rules, parties may conduct expedited arbitrations for disputes valued less than US$4.5 million, and absent extraordinary circumstances, arbitral awards must be rendered within six months of the tribunal's constitution.

An early dismissal mechanism enables the arbitrators to consider an application to dismiss claims or defenses at an early stage if they manifestly lack any legal basis or are manifestly outside the arbitrators' jurisdiction. In addition, emergency arbitration is available at the outset of arbitrations in cases where emergency interim relief is needed. The emergency arbitrators are appointed by SIAC within 24 hours of application to award immediate relief where warranted.

SIAC prioritizes time and cost considerations in its case management processes. Case management is currently run by a 12-member Secretariat under the direction of CEO Lim Seok Hui. The SIAC Court of Arbitration, presided by Gary Born, currently comprises of 32 eminent practitioners from around the world. The SIAC Board of Directors, chaired by Davinder Singh SC, consists of eight well-respected lawyers and corporate leaders. The SIAC Board is responsible for overseeing SIAC's operations, business development, as well as corporate governance matters.

At the SIAC, parties may choose qualified arbitrators who are multilingual, multicultural, and trained in common and civil law traditions. The arbitrators are experts in the relevant industry and sector specific to the technical nature of the disputes. SIAC supports gender, age, geography, and nationality diversity in the appointment of arbitrators.

With an international panel of over 400 expert arbitrators hailing from more than 40 jurisdictions, SIAC benefits from the cultural, ethnic, and language diversity that Singapore embodies. The institutional appointment of arbitrators at the SIAC is transparent and is not based on national committees. A list of the SIAC panel arbitrators can be found here.

SIAC strives to frequently engage with corporate counsel and arbitration users worldwide to continue to adapt its rules and processes to meet the evolving dispute resolution needs of users. Corporate leaders often consider international arbitration as a preferred means to efficiently resolve international commercial disputes.

As the commercial center of gravity shifts towards the East, SIAC's reputation as a global arbitral institution signifies that it is well placed to serve as a trusted neutral forum for dispute resolution

between the East and the West.

Kirsten Teo



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Kirsten Teo is international arbitration counsel at De Almeida Pereira in Washington, DC, and an advocate solicitor in Singapore. Teo is currently the only Singaporean special legal consultant in DC. She is a member of the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) Users' Council and YSIAC Committee, and a panel arbitrator at the Tashkent International Arbitration Centre. She represents

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Jonathan Huie



Incoming Litigation Associate

Seyfarth Shaw LLP. Bar Admission

Jonathan Huie is a 2020 graduate of the American University Washington College of Law and an incoming litigation associate at Seyfarth Shaw LLP. Bar Admission: Sat for October 2020 DC Bar Examination (awaiting results). Jonathan would like to thank Tiffani Alexander, Karmen Fox, and the rest of the *ACC Docket* editorial team for their contributions and edits to this article. Jonathan would also like to thank ACC President and CEO Veta Richardson and ACC Deputy General Counsel Veronica Pastor for their kind mentorship and support.