

Kluwer Arbitration Blog

In Memoriam: Dr Minas Khatchadourian (1958-2021)

Sheikh Thani Ali Al-Thani (Qatar International Centre for Conciliation and Arbitration) · Tuesday, October 5th, 2021

Dr Minas Khatchadourian left this world for the heavenly abode in July 2021. This news was a great shock to the Middle Eastern legal community. In particular, his loss will be significantly felt in Egypt – his home country – and Qatar – where Dr Khatchadourian spent the last ten years as the General Legal Counsel of the Qatar International Arbitration and Conciliation Centre (QICCA).

Dr Khatchadourian was a prominent lawyer with expertise in different Middle Eastern jurisdictions. He also served as an arbitrator within and outside of QICCA, and worked as a visiting faculty member at several universities in Egypt and Lebanon.

Dr Khatchadourian was born in Alexandria, Egypt, where completed his primary and secondary education. Thereafter, he proceeded to complete his undergraduate degree in law from Alexandria University in Egypt. He then obtained a Master's degree in international business law from Cairo University. Subsequently, Dr Khatchadourian obtained his doctorate degree in international trade contracts and arbitration from the University of Montpellier I in France; as part of that degree, he wrote a thesis on litigation and arbitration arising out of international commercial contracts. In 2003, he completed a diploma in European Law from Lyon Lumière Law School, University of Lyon III. Dr Khatchadourian was proficient in Arabic, French, English and Armenian.

His extensive academic qualifications demonstrated his interest in international commercial law and arbitration. He carried this passion into his practice, first in public service, when he was an Attorney at the State Lawsuit Authority in Egypt, and then in private practice, as the Managing Partner of the law firm Galal, Massoud and Khatchadourian. Dr Khatchadourian has worked on some notable cases both as counsel and arbitrator during his professional career. For example, he acted as counsel in a \$200 million dispute related to the Muscat International Airport, as an arbitrator in a CRCICA (Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration) arbitration concerning a high-value dispute related to a petrochemical distribution agreement, and as counsel in a CRCICA arbitration relating to a \$300 million dispute on a major cement plant in Egypt.

Undoubtedly, Dr Khatchadourian's made his biggest contribution to the Arab arbitration community as QICCA's General Legal Counsel. He held this position from June 2011 until his untimely death in July 2021. During this productive ten-year period, QICCA maintained its position as one of the leading arbitral centres in the region and the most commonly-used centre in Qatar. He endeavoured to improve the case administration team at QICCA by actively recruiting and training new case managers over the years and guiding them wherever necessary. He also

introduced other administrative measures to ensure that the institution operated swiftly and efficiently during the covid-related lockdown in Qatar in 2020.

However, at the forefront of his efforts was the drafting and publication of QICCA's updated conciliation and arbitration rules in 2012. Given his vast knowledge of commercial arbitration and familiarity with international best practices, Dr Khatchadourian (successfully) advocated the need to adopt the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules to bring QICCA at par with other leading institutions in the world. During 2020 and 2021, Dr Khatchadourian was also part of QICCA's task force working on a further update of its arbitration rules, so as to address remote hearings and other covid-related amendments. Unfortunately, Dr Khatchadourian will not see his efforts come to fruition but QICCA is grateful to him for his guidance and support during the process.

Amongst his other engagements, Dr Khatchadourian participated in a working group of the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) which is undertaking a Rules and Regulations Amendment Project, to modernise the 2006 Rules currently in force. He also advised on the Greater Arab Free Trade Area project, as well as the Economic Free Zones Law of Qatar. He sat as a member of the Editorial Board of the World Journal of Arbitration.

Dr Khatchadourian was known to be a man of great rectitude and integrity. He will always be lauded in Qatar (and more widely, in the Middle East) for his contributions to the arbitration community, and his infectious personality will be dearly missed.

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