



BLINNE NÍ GHRÁLAIGH

MAIN AREAS OF PRACTICE:

Arbitration
Crime and Regulatory
Discrimination and Equality
Environmental Law and Natural Resources
Extradition and Mutual Assistance
Human Rights Law
Immigration, Asylum and Free Movement
Inquests and Inquiries
International Law
Prison Law
Public Law
Public and Private International Law

Called to the Bar (England & Wales)
2005

Called to the Bar (Northern Ireland)
2013

Called to the Bar (Ireland) 2017

CONTACT:

blinnenighralaigh@matrixlaw.co.uk
+44 (0)20 7404 3447
Paul Venables, Senior Practice
Manager
paulvenables@matrixlaw.co.uk

Blinne is a human rights, international and criminal law expert, who advises and acts for individuals, States, NGOs and other national and international bodies, appearing in domestic courts and before international courts and tribunals.

Blinne is consistently recommended as a leading junior in the legal directories, which describe her as an “exceptionally talented lawyer” and a “stellar practitioner”, highlighting her “eagle eye” for issues and arguments, and the “passion” with which she approaches cases on behalf of her clients.

She is called to the Bars of Ireland, North and South, in addition to the Bar of England and Wales.

PUBLIC LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Blinne specialises in judicial review and administrative law. Her [public law](#) practice is focused primarily on cases raising questions of [human rights](#), [discrimination](#), [environmental](#), [international](#) and national security law, including cases concerning State involvement in torture and extra judicial killing. She has a particular specialism in legacy cases raising historic allegations against the State and State institutions, and is experienced in closed material procedures under the Justice and Security Act 2013.

Select cases include:

- **R (Campaign against the Arms Trade) v. Secretary of State for Business [2017] EWHC 1754 (QB):** intervened on behalf of Oxfam in a challenge to the UK’s continuing export of weapons to Saudi Arabia in the context of the War In Yemen
- **INEOS v. Persons Unknown [2017] EWHC 2945 (Ch):** acted for one of the defendants in this challenge to the grant of an unprecedented, wide-ranging injunction to a fracking company to restrain anti-fracking protests across the UK
- **In Re McGuigan [2017] NIQB 96:** junior counsel for the ‘Hooded Men’ in order to secure an investigation into UK ministerial authorisation of their torture in the early 1970s; the appeal brought by the Police Service of Northern Ireland is still ongoing
- **In Re McQuillan [2017] NIQB 28:** acted for the claimant in a judicial review against the Police Service of Northern Ireland for breach of its investigatory obligations arising under the common law, article 2 of the

DIRECTORIES' RECOMMENDATIONS

HERE'S WHAT THEY SAY

'She's great at analyzing very complex material and making the issues in the case accessible to those working with her.'

Chambers and Partners 2019
(Public International Law)

'Incredibly bright, hardworking and talented.'

Legal 500 2018
(Crime)

'An exceptionally talented lawyer, who has the ability to distil and deal effectively with the key issues in a case.'

Legal 500 2017
(Crime)

'Recommended for the crossover between public law and public international law.'

Legal 500 2017
(Public International Law)

'She's very approachable, excellent with clients and on top of the brief.'

Chambers and Partners 2017
(Public International Law)

'An impressive junior, with expertise spanning public international law, criminal law and human rights cases. "She has great ideas on how to build a case and present matters."

Chambers and Partners 2016
(Public International Law)

European Convention on Human Rights and international law regarding her sister's killing; appeal brought by the Respondent is still ongoing

- **Secretary of State for the Home Department v IM, JM and LG [2017] EWHC 1529 (Admin):** acted for one of the TPIM subjects in his challenge to the Secretary of State's decision to impose a notice on him under the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011
- **R (Al Fawwaz) v. Secretary of State for the Home Department [2015] EWHC 166 (Admin):** acted for this high profile defendant in his challenge to the UK's refusal to disclose materials requested by a US criminal court, pursuant to international co-operation agreements, including the UK-US Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, in relation to a terrorism-related prosecution
- **An Taisce (The National Trust for Ireland) v. Secretary of State for the Environment [2014] EWCA Civ 1111:** counsel for An Taisce in this challenge before the UK Court of Appeal to the UK government's grant of permission for a nuclear power station, 150 miles from the Irish coast, raising issues under the Espoo Convention 1991 and the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 1969
- **R (Kaur and Shah) v. Ealing London Borough Council [2008] EWHC 2062 (Admin):** junior counsel in this case involving the interpretation and application of the Race Equality Duty in relation to a decision to withdraw funding from the Southall Black Sisters in respect of their domestic violence work
- **In Re Fox (ongoing):** judicial review of the failure by State authorities to investigate serious criminal allegations against State servants and/or agents in relation to the double shooting of the applicant's elderly parents

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Blinne practices in all areas of criminal defence and criminal justice, in which she is ranked as a leading junior, including prison law, actions against the police and against other State authorities. She has particular expertise in free-speech and protest-related cases raising justification defences, and criminal cases raising questions of international law. She also acts on behalf of defendants charged under anti-terrorism legislation, and in death penalty appeals to the Privy Council. Blinne also has a particular specialism in cases involving fair trial rights, both domestically and internationally, and is routinely requested to observe at criminal proceedings overseas. Internationally, she acts and advises individuals and NGOs on matters of international criminal law, including in relation to complaints to the International Criminal Court regarding alleged war crimes, contrary to the Rome Statute.

Her recent cases include:

- **R v. MacKeith and others (Stansted 15):** currently acting for one of 15 protestors facing terrorism-related charges for preventing a charter deportation flight from taking off
- **R v. Walton and Woodhouse:** successful defence of a Methodist minister and Quaker charged with criminal damage following their break in to BAE Systems
- **R v Anjem Choudary [2016] EWCA Crim 61:** acted for the Appellant in this high profile case before the Court of Appeal concerning freedom of speech and freedom of conscience in the interpretation of terrorism legislation

- **R v. Ammori and others:** successful defence of a number of protestors charged in relation to their obstruction of one of the largest arms fairs in the world, held in London
- **R v. Jaciewicz and others:** successful defence of a number of protestors charged for their protest against a drones factory, supplying drones to Israel
- **R v Keeler and others:** successful defence of a high profile defendant, charged with attempting to leave the UK to fight in Syria
- **Mitcham v. The Queen (Saint Christopher & Nevis) [2009] UKPC 5 (16 March 2009):** junior counsel in this St Christopher and Nevis death penalty appeal before the Privy Council raising issues relating to the right to a fair trial
- **R v. Golding and others:** acted in the successful defence of one of six defendants prosecuted for conspiracy to harm an animal research organisation, contrary to s.145 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005
- **Israeli Military Commander v Ahed Tamimi:** observed at the military court proceedings concerning Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi, her mother and cousin

PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW

Blinne is recognised in the legal directories as a leading junior in public international law. Her practice covers a broad spectrum of public international law, including international human rights, humanitarian law, international criminal law, boundary delimitations, environmental law, immunities, and treaty drafting. She is instructed in cases before the International Court of Justice, and arbitral tribunals, including tribunals constituted under Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Blinne is also instructed as amicus in cases in foreign national jurisdictions raising matters of international law, and is expert in drafting submissions to the various United Nations Special Procedures and Treaty bodies.

Select cases include:

- **Advising the Republic of Macedonia in treaty negotiations with Greece** regarding the name of the State and its accession to regional and international organisations
- **Legal advice on the legality of arms exports to Saudi Arabia** for use in Yemen, under the Arms Trade Treaty and European Union and domestic law, co-authored with Professors Philippe Sands QC and Andrew Clapham
- **Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia):** claim before the International Court of Justice for breach of the Genocide Convention, with Professor Philippe Sands QC and Professor James Crawford SC
- **ARA Libertad Arbitration (Argentina v. Ghana):** co-counsel for Ghana in arbitral proceedings initiated by Argentina pursuant to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea concerning the seizure by Ghana of an Argentinian war ship
- **Case concerning the Interpretation of Article 11(1) of the Interim Accord of 1995 (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia v. Greece):** co-counsel for Macedonia in its successful claim by

Macedonia against Greece before the International Court of Justice for breach of treaty obligations

- **Guyana v. Suriname:** member of the legal team acting for Guyana in this international maritime boundary dispute under UNCLOS raising allegations of use of force at sea, for which the Permanent Court of Arbitration acted as registry
- **Frontier v. Czech Republic:** junior counsel for the Czech Republic in this investor-State arbitration under the UNCITRAL rules alleging breach of the US-Czech Republic Bilateral Investment Treaty ('BIT')
- **Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum:** drafted amicus brief submitted on behalf of English law practitioners to the United States Supreme Court regarding domestic routes of redress for extraterritorial breaches of international human rights law
- **In Re Apartheid:** contributor to the amicus brief submitted on behalf of a number of human rights organisations against American and German corporations for alleged complicity in the South African apartheid regime

APPOINTMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Blinne was appointed a visiting fellow to Harvard Law School in 2016. Her research focused on the Arms Trade Treaty and on Israeli military courts in occupied Palestine, drawing on her extensive expertise regarding military courts under international humanitarian law and regarding the law of armed conflict and international criminal law more generally.

Since 2014, she has been Vice Chair of the Bar Human Rights Committee, the international human rights arm of the Bar Council, on behalf of which she regularly conducts trial observations, participates in international legal missions, drafts legal interventions, and provides training to NGOs and national Bar associations on matters of international law and human rights.

In 2013, she was appointed a Pegasus Fellow to the Centre for Constitutional Rights in New York, where her work and research focused on claims against corporations for human rights violations, including under the Alien Tort Statute.

Blinne's publications and conference notes include:

- Author of "Civilian Protections and the Arms Trade Treaty", in *The Grey Zone*, Lattimer & Sands (eds) (Hart, 2018)
- Panelist at Chatham House's event 'Milestones in International Criminal Justice: The ICC and Palestine' (2 December 2014)
- Co-author (with Philippe Sands QC) of 'Towards an International Rule of Law?' in *Tom Bingham and the Transformation of the Law: A Liber Amicorum* (Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Co-author (with Professor Philippe Sands QC) of 'Human Rights, International Justice and the Rule of Law' in *Globalisation - A Liberal Response* (CentreForum, 2007)
- Contributing author to *Human Rights and Criminal Justice*, Emmerson, Ashworth and Macdonald (2nd Ed., Sweet & Maxwell, 2007)

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BACKGROUND, EDUCATION AND PRIZES

Prior to pursuing her legal studies, Blinne worked on the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, for the legal team representing the wounded and the families of those killed, and for a civil action law specialist solicitors in London. She also spent three months in Trinidad & Tobago, working with prisoners on death row.

Blinne graduated from Queens' College, Cambridge with First Class Honours in Modern and Medieval Languages, received a distinction on the Graduate Diploma in Law and was graded Outstanding on the Bar Vocational Course, placing fourth in her year. She holds an LLM in International Legal Studies (equivalent distinction) from New York University, where she specialised in international environmental law and climate refugees. She also holds certificates from the London School of Economics in Law, War and Human Rights, and International Human Rights Law and Practice.

Scholarships and prizes include:

- Pegasus Scholarship, Inns of Court
- Phoenicia Scholarship, Bar European Group
- International Scholarship, Centre for Capital Punishment Studies
- Buchanan Prize, Lincoln's Inn
- Bairstow Scholarship, ICSL
- St Thomas More Bursary, Lincoln's Inn
- Lord Bowen Scholarship, Lincoln's Inn
- Hardwicke Award, Lincoln's Inn
- Foundation Scholarship, Queen's College, Cambridge University

Blinne is regulated by the Bar Standards Board and accepts instructions under Standard Contractual Terms, details of which can be found on our website under Code of Conduct.