

Curtis promotes member of Libya team in New York



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A member of the team that successfully defended Libya's National Oil Corporation in two ICC arbitrations has been promoted to partner at Curtis Mallet Prevost Colt & Mosle in New York, as the firm also announces two new counsel.

Robert Garcia was promoted to partner from counsel on 1 January. His team's success for the Libya National Oil Corporation is reported by GAR today.

Former senior associates **Simon Batifort** and **Arianna Sánchez** were made counsel.

Garcia joined Curtis in 2008, after working as a criminal defence lawyer in New York, for the Office of Appellate Defenders, the Neighbourhood Defender Service of Harlem and Bronx Defenders.

He has experience representing foreign states and state-owned entities in arbitrations under ICSID and ICC rules. As well as acting on the Libyan case, he was a member of the Curtis team that defended Venezuela and its state oil company PDVSA against claims of expropriation by ExxonMobil at ICSID and secured an annulment of US\$1.4 billion of an award in the oil company's favour.

He also acted for PDVSA in the first US Supreme Court Case that addressed the expropriation exception to immunity under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act.

He is currently acting for a private Asian corporation in a further ICC arbitration.

Garcia is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and George Washington University Law School. As partner at Curtis, he says that he hopes to continue balancing his work between arbitration and the courtroom.

The two new counsel, Batifort and Sanchez, have both been with Curtis for six years and have also worked on the *ExxonMobil v Venezuela* case.

Identified as a future arbitration leader by GAR's sister publication *Who's Who Legal*, Batifort is a French national who is dual qualified in Paris and New York.

He is adjunct professor at Brooklyn Law School and has co-written an article which will soon be published in the *American Journal of International Law* on the interpretation of most favoured nation clauses in investment treaties.

He is also part of a Curtis team defending India against an UNCITRAL claim brought by Vodafone.

He studied law at the University of Montpellier and Pantheon-Assas University in Paris and holds an LLM from New York University School of Law.

Sánchez is a Mexican national who is dual-qualified in New York and Mexico.

She completed an LLM at Stanford Law School, where she was a Fulbright Scholar, as well as an MA in Economics at Stanford University.

As well as acting on the *ExxonMobil* against Venezuela, she was part of a team that represented the state in a US\$213 million ICSID claim brought by oil services group Tidewater. The state was ordered to pay US\$43 million to the company and later an annulment committee reduced this to US\$33 million.

Sánchez has also worked on a US\$29.17 billion ICSID claim brought by ConocoPhillips against Venezuela.

George Kahale III, the New York-based head of international arbitration at Curtis, tells GAR that the firm thinks "these young stars have very bright futures and will help us maintain our strong position."

