



Sârra-Tilila Bounfour

Independent Consultant - Investigations & Dispute Resolution

Details

Email

sarratilila@stbintegrity.com

Nationality

French-Moroccan

Skills

Investigations

Witness & subject interviews

Investigative report drafting

International administrative & arbitral proceedings

Anti-fraud & anti-corruption legal frameworks

Policy & legislative drafting

Training & coaching

Languages

English



French



Italian



Spanish



Links

[My LinkedIn profile](#)

[STB Integrity LinkedIn page](#)

[STB Integrity website](#)

Profile

Sârra-Tilila Bounfour is a dually qualified lawyer with over 12 years' legal & investigative experience in Paris, Rome, and Washington DC. Dedicated to the promotion of integrity and the global fight against corruption, Sârra-Tilila's practice is at the crossroads of investigations, dispute resolution, and international development, with a focus on the African continent.

Prior to founding her consulting firm, she spent a decade in law firms and international organizations tackling integrity issues, from the policy, investigative, and judicial angles.

Sârra-Tilila has conducted dozens of investigations for international organizations, national development agencies, and governments. She has a proven track-record of successful investigations into allegations of fraud, corruption, collusion, embezzlement and other prohibited practices. She has also assisted with investigations into allegations of interpersonal abusive practices such as harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation & abuse ("SEA").

She has also acted in integrity-related litigation, from internal disciplinary procedures to advocacy before international tribunals. Her expertise includes administrative sanctioning bodies such as the World Bank Sanctions Board, international administrative tribunals like the International Labor Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT), and international arbitral tribunals constituted under the major rules (ICC, ICSID, UNICTRAL, OHADA etc.).

Sârra-Tilila is the co-founder of MIPA, the first network dedicated to integrity professionals in international organizations. She regularly speaks at conferences and lectures on topics such as anti-corruption, investigative procedures & interviewing techniques, sanctions systems of MDBs and international organizations.

A dually qualified lawyer in New York State and in Paris (currently not practicing), she speaks fluently English & French, and is conversant in Italian.

Experience

STB Integrity , Founder & Consultant

Oct 2022 Global

Helping international organizations, national development agencies, and other development & humanitarian sector entities achieve their integrity goals


- Conducting internal and external investigations into breaches of ethical & integrity standards
- Performing quality assurance checks on investigative work products
- Assisting clients with the resolution of post-investigation disputes: staff disciplinary procedures & subsequent appeals, administrative sanctions proceedings and contract termination litigation & arbitration against third parties involved in misconduct, referrals to national authorities
- Boosting clients' integrity capacity: policy-drafting, pro-active integrity reviews and risks assessments, practical skills training for staff & stakeholders

World Food Programme (WFP) , Legal Officer

Apr 2021 – Sep 2022  Rome


- Advising investigators and HR officers on legal aspects of staff misconduct: investigative procedures, disciplinary proceedings, referrals to national authorities
- Advising senior management on employee appeals against administrative decisions relating to investigations and disciplinary sanctions
- Representing WFP in litigation before the FAO Appeals Committee and the ILOAT
- Drafting integrity prevention policies
- Designing knowledge management materials on investigations & discipline
- Advising on privileges & immunities of WFP personnel

World Bank, Integrity Vice Presidency (INT) , Investigator & Litigator

Sep 2018 – Mar 2021  Washington, D.C.


- Performing preliminary assessment of Francophone complaints
- Leading complex investigations in English & French into allegations of fraud, corruption, collusion, coercion and obstruction in World Bank-funded projects in Africa, from inception to final investigation report
- Representing INT in post-investigation settlement negotiations and in sanctions litigation proceedings under the World Bank's sanctions procedures
- Drafting referrals of substantiated allegations of sanctionable practices to relevant national authorities as needed, in coordination with the Legal department

DLA Piper, Investigations, Litigation & Arbitration , Senior Associate

Jan 2013 – Aug 2018  Paris

- Conducting independent investigations and leading multi-professional teams of lawyers, forensic accountants, digital forensic specialists & other experts
- Advising public sector clients on white-collar crime matters, including mutual legal assistance procedures as well as criminal law & criminal procedure reforms
- Representing clients in international investment & commercial arbitrations under the major rules (ICSID, ICC, OHADA, UNCITRAL etc.) and post-award litigation
- Advising public sector clients on risk mitigation in the structuring of major development projects, especially in the infrastructure & mining sectors

Hector Farina Avocats , Associate

Oct 2012 – Dec 2013  Paris

- Advising IFIs & governments on international projects in energy, natural resources, and infrastructure sectors: project structuring, procurement processes, contract drafting, negotiations

Public International Law & Policy Group (PILPG) , Legal Consultant

May 2010 – Jul 2012  Washington, D.C. / Abidjan

- Advising post-conflict governments in MENA, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia on public international law aspects of peace processes and sustainable political development
- Leading a team of 6 experts to assess Ivory Coast's transitional justice strategy, and drafted a 100+ page report in English & French for the President & Prime Minister
- Managing a project team of research associates & research associates
- Managing the Francophone Practice Group

Selected Engagements

Investigations

- Investigated allegations of widespread fraud, collusion, and corruption in the procurement of works to combat soil erosion under a half-billion dollar World Bank-financed project for climate change mitigation & adaptation in Africa, resulting in sanctions against several companies and individuals as well as the adoption of strengthened preventive measures for the project
- Investigated allegations of fraud, collusion and corruption in the procurement and execution of several contracts under a World Bank-financed public sector management project in Liberia, resulting in the debarment of several companies and the removal of high-level officials from the project management team
- Investigated a dozen allegations of fraud, collusion and corruption in the procurement and implementation of several IT services and equipment contracts under a World Bank-financed social protection project in Liberia
- Investigated allegations of corruption in the emergency procurement of works for the rehabilitation of a water supply system in the DRC under a multi donor-funded health sector project, resulting in the removal of a senior project official
- Investigated allegations of fraud, misappropriation and embezzlement of Dutch aid for a water sector project in Benin, resulting in the resignation of a minister, official state apologies and the adoption of anti-fraud preventive measures ([more information](#))
- Assisted the Republic of Guinea with its investigation into allegations of corruption around the award of mining rights over one of the largest iron ore deposits in the world and mutual legal assistance procedures with half a dozen countries, resulting in the [withdrawal](#) of the rights from the corrupting companies for their reallocation pursuant to a legally compliant tender and [criminal sanctions](#) against the individuals involved in Switzerland

Dispute resolution

International administrative tribunals

- Represented INT before the World Bank's Suspension & Debarment Officer in sanctions proceedings against a company for corrupt practices in the procurement and execution of a works contract under a climate change mitigation & adaptation in Nigeria, resulting in a 5 year debarment (Sanctions Case No. 675)
- Represented INT in sanctions proceedings against a senior project consultant under a World-Bank financed contract for corrupt practices in the procurement of emergency equipment and works in the DRC (pending)
- Represented INT in sanctions proceedings against a senior project official for collusion and corruption in the procurement of several contracts under a World Bank-financed public sector management project in Liberia, and against a company that made corrupt payments to that official, resulting in debarment and conditional non-debarment sanctions (Sanctions Board Decisions No. 138 and 139)
- Represented INT in post-investigation settlement negotiations with an international group of IT service companies that led to its debarment for fraudulent and collusive practices ([press release](#))
- Represented WFP before the ILOAT in an appeal by a former employee challenging a disciplinary decision of dismissal for conflict of interests arising from outside political activities (pending)

- Represented WFP before the ILOAT in an appeal by a former employee against a disciplinary decision of summary dismissal for serious misconduct, including fraud and gross negligence in the performance of their duties (pending)
- Advised WFP on multiple administrative proceedings regarding disciplinary measures for employee misconduct and proceedings initiated by employees regarding the treatment of their claims of harassment and other abusive conduct

International arbitral tribunals

- Sitting as sole arbitrator in a French language, *ad hoc* arbitration under the UNCITRAL rules, governed by the general principles of international commercial law, relating to a construction contract between an international organization and a private company (pending)
- Representing the Republic of Guinea in multi-billion dollar, French & English language, ICSID arbitrations brought by the investor alleging expropriation of a mining concession and related rights to one of the world's most important iron ore deposits, which the government had withdrawn following an investigation and findings of corruption (BSG Resources Limited, BSG Resources (Guinea) Limited and BSG Resources (Guinea) SÀRL v. Republic of Guinea (ICSID Case No. ARB/14/22)) (award rendered in May 2022 confirming the findings of corruption and awarding the State over 5 million USD in costs)
- Representing a State in a USD 40 million, Paris seated, French language, French law ICC arbitration relating to the procurement of military equipment and involving allegations of fraud in the procurement and the execution of the contract
- Representing a state in a Paris seated, French language, ICC arbitration relating to the validity of agreements in relation to the sale of an aircraft and involving allegations of fraud and international sanctions violation

Legislative & policy-drafting

- Advised on the revision of the WFP anti-fraud & anti-corruption policy and related guidance for staff
- Advised on the revision of the WFP anti-harassment & sexual harassment policy and related materials for staff
- Advised on the development of standard operating procedures the referral by WFP of credible allegations of criminal conduct to national authorities
- Assisted an African government on the creation of a national anti-corruption authority and the drafting of the necessary legislative instruments
- Advised an African government on the revision of the penal code and the criminal procedure code

Bar Admissions

New York State, U.S.A.

2012

Paris, France

2013  Currently not practicing

Qualifications

Quantic School of Business & Technology, Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)

2020 📍 Washington, D.C.

Université Paris Nanterre, Master 2 (L.L.M.) in French & Common Law

2011 📍 Paris

American University Washington College of Law, Juris Doctor (J.D.)

2011 📍 Washington, D.C.

Thought Leadership

MDB Integrity Professionals Association (MIPA), Co-Founder & Co-Chair

Nov 2020 – Present 📍 Global

- Co-created the first professional network dedicated to integrity investigation and litigation in international organizations, now counting 850+ participants
- Organizing regular events including expert debates, round-table discussions, and training sessions on integrity investigations and integrity litigation before international administrative tribunals
- Curating a weekly job board on LinkedIn
- Developing a mentoring program for integrity professionals in international organizations

Speaking & Teaching Engagements

- Keynote speech at the 6th IFRC Annual Conference on Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Organizations (2022)
- Lecture on “The World Bank Sanctions System” at the University of Ottawa (2022)
- Presentation on the interplay of international aid & investments, corruption, and dispute resolution at the conference “A Conversation: Passion and Tension between China and Africa” at Duke University School of Law (2020)
- FIAA/MIDS 2-day advocacy in international arbitration workshop on “Cross-Examination of Fact Witnesses” at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva (2018)
- IHEI Summer School course on “Recognition, Annulment, and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards” at Université Panthéon-Assas in Paris (2017 & 2018)
- Seminars for law students & legal professionals on legal research & drafting and on witness questioning (2014-2018)