David McKeever

Associate Member

Called to the Bar of England and Wales, 2010.



Introduction

David McKeever is an international legal expert with twenty years of progressive experience, specializing in international dispute settlement and national security. He has worked with international organisations across multiple regions, including the United Nations Security Council, the International Court of Justice, the World Bank, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He has worked for tribunals and parties in international litigation, and has advised multiple States on compliance with international legal obligations.

He holds an LL.M in International Law from the University of Cambridge (First Class), a Masters in Forced Migration from the University of Oxford (with Distinction), and a BA in European Studies from Trinity College Dublin (First Class). He is currently undertaking a PhD in International Law at the University of Oxford (part-time).

David has published widely in peer-reviewed journals, and taught at the U.S. Department of Defence Institute for International Legal Studies as well as Columbia University and the City University of New York.

International dispute settlement

Prior to coming to the Bar, David worked with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague between 2010 and 2015.

As law clerk to H.E. Judge Sir Kenneth Keith and H.E. Judge Sir Christopher Greenwood, he worked on all cases coming before the Court, at provisional measures, jurisdiction/admissibility, and merits phases:

- *Ahmadou Sadio Diallo (Guinea v DRC) – diplomatic protection*
- *Territorial and Maritime Dispute (Nicaragua v Colombia) – delimitation, law of the sea*
- *Application of CERD (Georgia v the Russian Federation) – preliminary objections*

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CHAMBERS

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- Certain activities in the border area (Nicaragua v Costa Rica) – use of force, environmental harm
- Judgment of ILO Tribunal on complaint against IFAD – administrative law (Advisory Opinion)
- Application of the Interim Accord (FYROM v Greece) – breach of bilateral treaty, countermeasures
- The obligation to prosecute or extradite (Belgium v Senegal) – international criminal law
- Jurisdictional Immunities of the State (Germany v Italy) – state immunity
- Frontier Dispute (Burkina Faso/Niger) – border delimitation
- Aerial Herbicide Spraying (Ecuador v Colombia) – transboundary environmental harm
- Request for Interpretation (Cambodia v Thailand) – border delimitation
- Maritime Dispute (Peru v Chile) – maritime border delimitation
- Whaling in the Antarctic (Australia v Japan) – environmental law
- Application of the Genocide Convention (Croatia v Serbia) – international criminal law
- Questions Relating to the seizure and detention of documents (Timor-Leste v Australia) – seizure of State documents in context of pending arbitration

David also provided research and legal analysis for the President of the Tribunal in ConocoPhillips Petrozuata B.V. and others v Venezuela (ICSID Case No ARB/07/30) – jurisdiction and merits

National security and sanctions

Prior to coming to the Bar, David worked for the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), as Legal Officer (2016-2023) and Senior Legal Officer (2023-2026).

In these roles he was charged with assessing State compliance with Security Council resolutions on terrorism, in the areas of: criminal justice; countering the financing of terrorism; law enforcement; border management; and consistency with international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

In this capacity he conducted more than thirty country assessment visits on behalf of the UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee, to States in the Middle East; Western Europe; the Balkans; North America; Central Asia; West Africa; the Horn of Africa; and East and South-East Asia. He regularly led technical sessions with State interlocutors, drafted detailed assessment reports, negotiated with senior officials, and presented findings before the Counter-Terrorism Committee. He provided legal advice to United Nations field operations, advised States on legislative drafting, and regularly represented CTED at international workshops and conferences on contemporary issues in counter-terrorism law.

In his academic career, David has published and taught extensively on counter-terrorism law across multiple jurisdictions.

International administrative law

As Counsel with the World Bank Administrative Tribunal (2015-2016), David analysed staff rules and contracts of employment, conducted legal research, and assessed evidentiary items in cases raising a range of administrative law issues including:

allegations of harassment, discrimination; misconduct; retaliation; non-renewal of appointments; termination. For each assigned case, he prepared summaries of pleadings submitted by parties to the Tribunal, identified legal issues and relevant precedents, prepared memoranda for Judges. He also assisted Judges during deliberations, prepared draft judgments for adoption by the Tribunal, and advised potential applicants on Tribunal procedures.

With the International Court of Justice, David worked on an Advisory Opinion arising from a Judgment of the ILO Administrative Tribunal, raising questions of powers to contract, the relations between international organisations, legal personality, and contracts of employment.

International Criminal Law

In addition to working with the Defence Support Section at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (2009), David worked on cases relating to international crimes with the International Court of Justice (Obligation to prosecute or extradite *(Belgium v Senegal) and Application of the Genocide Convention (Croatia v Serbia)).*

With the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (2016-2023), he regularly advised States on compliance with treaty obligations in the area of international criminal law, including as relates to codification of offences, assertion of jurisdiction, extradition and mutual legal assistance. He also advised States on ensuring that their international counter-terrorism obligations were implemented in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law, including as relates to the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

In his academic career, David has published on international humanitarian law, issues of evidence before international criminal tribunals, and international obligations relating to extradition.

Human rights and refugee law

With the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate David advised States on compliance with international human rights law, refugee law, and international humanitarian law. He also has extensive experience working for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in Sudan (where he conducted refugee status determination), Benin, Thailand, Georgia, and Tanzania.

In his academic career, David has published and taught extensively on human rights and refugee law.

Education

University of Oxford, United Kingdom – 2024- PhD (part-time) "The UN Security Council and international counter-terrorism law"

University of Law, United Kingdom – 2009-2010 – Bar Vocational Course ('outstanding')

University of Law, United Kingdom – 2007-2008 – Graduate Diploma in Law (with Distinction)

The University of Cambridge, United Kingdom – 2006-2006, LL.M in International Law (First Class)

The University of Oxford, United Kingdom – 2001-2002, M.St in Forced Migration (with Distinction)

University of Dublin, Trinity College – 1997 – 2001, BA European Studies (First Class)

Memberships

Bar of England and Wales
The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple
The European Society of International Law

Selected Publications

"The International Court of Justice and UN Security Council resolutions on terrorism: staying on the margins?" (2026) *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law,* forthcoming

"International Conventions" in J. Blackbourn, S. Macdonald & K. Vaughan (eds), *Elgar Concise Encyclopaedia of Terrorism Law*, forthcoming

"The International Court of Justice and international counter-terrorism law: impact to date and the potential for more" (2026) 15(1) *Cambridge International Law Journal* 30

"Withdrawal of citizenship as a method of countering terrorism: under-regulated and counterproductive?" (2026) *European Human Rights Law Review* 1

"Sustaining peace in the aftermath of armed conflicts: amnesties and the UN Security Council's regime on terrorism" (2024) 13(2) *Cambridge International Law Journal* 211

"Old rules to fix new problems: counter-terrorism, refugees, and withdrawal of nationality" (2023) 29(1) *Journal of Conflict and Security Law* 97

"Repatriating Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their family members: what international law requires, and what national courts will do" (2022) 28(1) *Journal of Conflict and Security Law* 67

"Revisiting Security Council action on terrorism: new threats; (a lot of) new law; same old problems?" (2021) 34(2) *Leiden Journal of International Law* 441

"International humanitarian law and counter-terrorism: fundamental values, conflicting obligations" (2020) 69(1) *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 43

"International Administrative Law case summaries (ICJ, ILOAT)", *International Law Reports* 164, August 2016

"Evolving interpretation of multilateral treaties: 'acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations' in the Refugee Convention" (2014) 64(2) *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 405

"Evidence obtained through torture before the Khmer Rouge Tribunal: Unlawful Pragmatism?" (2010) *Journal of International Criminal Justice* (2)

"The Human Rights Act and anti-terrorism in the UK: One great leap forward by Parliament, but are the Courts able to slow the steady retreat that has followed?" (2010) *Public Law* (January)

"The contribution of the ICJ to the law on the use of force: missed opportunities or unrealistic expectations?" (2009) *Nordic Journal of International Law* 78(3)

"Foreign Territory: the internationalization of EU asylum policy", Oxfam GB, 2005 (with Jessica Schultz and Sophia Swithern)

Conference papers and associated academic work

"Uneven judicialization in counter-terrorism: using the language more than the law?", European Society of International Law Annual Conference: ESIL IG on International Courts and Tribunals, Malaga, September 2026.

"Determining (Indefinite) Threats to International Peace and Security: Process and Implications – The Case of Counter-Terrorism", The Law and Reality of Implementing the Responsibility to Maintain International Peace and Security, University of Liverpool, June 2026

"Withdrawal of citizenship as a method for countering terrorism: under-regulated and counterproductive?", In the Name of National Security: The Fragility of Human Rights - Centre for Public Law, University of Cambridge & Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Madrid, July 2025

"'In all forms and manifestations'. The UN Security Council's Legislative Response to the Permacrisis of (International) Terrorism", European Society of International Law Research Forum, Catania, March 2025

"Sustaining peace in the aftermath of armed conflicts: Amnesties and the UN Security Council's regime on terrorism", Cambridge International Law Journal International Conference, Cambridge, April 2024.

"Facilitating Compliance through Dialogue: Socialisation and State Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on Terrorism", American Society of International Law Mid-Year Meeting, Pittsburgh, November 2023.

"Compliance in Practice: Monitoring Implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on terrorism", paper presented at New Approaches to Compliance, Courts Centre of Excellence, University of Copenhagen, 18 March 2022.

Reporter: Oxford Reports on International Human Rights Law – African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights; Oxford Reports on International Law in Domestic Courts – United Kingdom

Expert Reviewer: Leiden Journal of International Law; Journal of Conflict and Security Law; Cambridge International Law Journal.

Awards

Harmsworth Scholar (Honourable Society of the Middle Temple, 2010)

Colombos International Law Essay Prize (Honourable Society of the Middle Temple (2010)

Elected to Title of Scholar (Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge, 2006)

Lynford-Stanford Prize for performance in LLM Examinations (Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge, 2006)

Languages

English (Native)
French (Proficient)