



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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JUSTICE ARIF BULKAN TO JOIN THE CCJ BENCH

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Mr Justice Arif Bulkan, a national of Guyana, has been selected by the Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission (RJLSC), the independent body responsible for recruiting staff and judges for the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), to join the CCJ as a Judge. He will fill the vacancy created by the elevation of the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson to the presidency of the Court on 4 July 2025.

Justice Bulkan holds a Bachelor of Laws from The University of the West Indies; a Legal Education Certificate from the Hugh Wooding Law School; a Master of Laws from University College London; and a Doctor of Philosophy in Law from Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Canada. He has worked both regionally and internationally and in the course of his career has functioned in various capacities, including as litigator, academic, author, activist, judge, and international law expert.

Justice Bulkan was admitted to the Bar in Guyana in 1990 and thereafter practiced law at the Chambers of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) from 1990 to 1996, rising to the rank of Assistant DPP. He was in private practice from 1997 to 2004. Justice Bulkan sat on the Court of Appeal of Guyana in 2018, and since May 2022, has served as a Judge of the Court of Appeal of Belize.

Between 2008 and 2022, Justice Bulkan taught in the Faculty of Law of The University of the West Indies. He was also an expert member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, serving as one of the Committee's Vice Chairpersons from 2019 to 2022. He was elected in June 2023 to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights for a four-year term and is currently serving as the Commission's Second Vice-President.

Justice Bulkan has published widely on indigenous rights, human rights, and constitutional law, including as sole author of *'The Survival of Indigenous Rights in Guyana'* (2012) and a co-author of *'Fundamentals of Caribbean Constitutional Law'* (first edition 2015 and second edition 2021). For his work in human rights, Justice Bulkan was conferred with the *Anthony Sabga Caribbean Award for Public and Civic Contributions* in 2017 and was named a PANCAP/CARICOM Champion for Change in 2017.

In making the announcement, the Chairman of the RJLSC and President of the CCJ, the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson, took the opportunity to reiterate that 'The RJLSC has the legal responsibility of making appointments to the office of Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice and makes these appointments based solely on the merits of the applicants including their expertise, integrity, and dedication to justice. During the recruitment process, the Commission received approximately 26 applications from Australia, Barbados, Canada, Cameroon, Fiji, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, The United States of America, and Trinidad and Tobago. Of the applications received, five candidates, three males and two females, were shortlisted for further consideration and subsequently interviewed and the successful applicant appointed. The Commission remains committed to maintaining a process that is fair, transparent, and impartial.'

It is expected that Justice Bulkan will be sworn-in as a Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice in October 2025 and is the third Guyanese national to be appointed to the CCJ Bench.



Mr Justice Arif Bulkan

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About the Caribbean Court of Justice

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was inaugurated in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on 16 April 2005 and presently has a Bench of six judges presided over by CCJ President, the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson. The CCJ has an Original and an Appellate Jurisdiction and is effectively, therefore, two courts in one. In its Original Jurisdiction, it is an international court with exclusive jurisdiction to interpret and apply the rules set out in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) and to decide disputes arising under it. The RTC established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). In its Original Jurisdiction, the CCJ is critical to the CSME and all 12 Member States which belong to the CSME (including their citizens, businesses, and governments) can access the Court's Original Jurisdiction to protect their rights under the RTC. In its Appellate Jurisdiction, the CCJ is the final court of appeal for criminal and civil matters for those countries in the Caribbean that alter their national Constitutions to enable the CCJ to perform that role. At present, five states access the Court in its Appellate Jurisdiction, these being Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, and Saint Lucia. However, by signing and ratifying the Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Court of Justice, Member States of the Community have demonstrated a commitment to making the CCJ their final court of appeal. The Court is the realisation of a vision of our ancestors, an expression of independence and a signal of the region's coming of age.

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