



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

134 HENRY STREET

PORT OF SPAIN

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Telephone: (868) 612-5CCJ Fax: (868) 624-4710

Website: www.ccj.org

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JUSTICE BULKAN SWORN IN AS CCJ JUDGE

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. On Thursday, 16 October 2025, the Honourable Mr Justice Arif Bulkan was sworn-in as a Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) during a ceremony at The Office of the President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana (Guyana) by His Excellency, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali.

At the swearing-in ceremony, President Ali was in high praise of Justice Bulkan's appointment to the Bench and underscored the necessity of the CCJ. 'It reminds us that justice in the Caribbean does not flow from a distant metropole, but from within the Caribbean itself, from our own conscience, culture, and commitment to fairness,' he said.

His Excellency offered a glowing tribute to a native son, describing him as a 'man of intellect' and expressing that his appointment was 'both a personal triumph and a national honour.' 'We are certain that he will bring to the Court the same clarity of thought, depth of analysis, and balance of judgment that have characterised his distinguished career,' His Excellency added.

His Excellency also made a call to fellow CARICOM Member States who have yet to accede to the CCJ, encouraging them to complete the mission that began with Independence. 'When every member state entrusts its highest judicial authority to the CCJ, we will at last realise the full promise of Caribbean sovereignty; justice dispensed by our own, grounded in our own values, and guided by the collective wisdom of our region.'

President of the CCJ, the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson, welcomed Mr Justice Bulkan to the Bench and remarked that, 'The people of Guyana have great reason to be proud of their son's elevation to the CCJ.' President Anderson also highlighted Mr Justice Bulkan's work in the field of activism, stating that, 'As an advocate, he has been recognised for his work in human rights in the region; fighting for the rights of indigenous peoples and the marginalised, and for environmental rights.'

The Chancellor of the Judiciary (Ag), the Honourable Mme Justice Roxane George, reflected fondly on her UWI and Hugh Wooding Law School classmate, Mr Justice Bulkan, describing him as a 'brilliant student who has maintained that same standard of excellence throughout his career.' She added, 'As we mark the 20th year of the CCJ, your appointment not only builds on the Court's proud legacy but also reinforces its enduring commitment to excellence.'

In response to the tributes, Mr Justice Bulkan shared that being appointed to the CCJ was deeply meaningful to him. 'I am acutely conscious of what this court represents in terms of decolonisation and regional integration, and it is an honour and privilege to have the opportunity to participate,' he stated. Mr Justice Bulkan also held the CCJ in high regard for the 'unwavering commitment to the promotion of Human Rights.'

Mr Justice Bulkan wears multiple hats as an attorney, academic, author, teacher, international law expert and advocate. Now, he adds judge to his multi-faceted profile. As the newest member of the CCJ Bench, Mr Justice Bulkan is the third Guyanese national to be appointed. He follows in the footsteps of the late Mme Justice Désirée Bernard (2005-2014) and the late Mr Justice Duke E.E. Pollard (2005-2010).

Mr Justice Arif Bulkan was selected by the Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission (RJLSC), the independent body responsible for recruiting staff and judges for the CCJ. He fills the vacancy created by the elevation of Mr Justice Anderson to the Office of the President of the Court on 4 July 2025. Mr 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 during his career and has functioned in various capacities, including as litigator, academic, author, activist, judge, and international law expert.

Mr 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. Mr 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, Mr 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.



Mr Justice Bulkan takes oath during his swearing-in ceremony next to President Mohamed Irfaan Ali.

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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 seven 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.

For more information please contact:
The Public Education & Protocol Unit
Tel: (868) 612-5225 ext. 2260, 2246
Email: ccjcomm@ccj.org