



Ambassador Rena Lee

SINGAPORE CANDIDATE
INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

2027 - 2036

Statement of the Minister



“Ambassador Lee's nomination underscores Singapore's enduring commitment to the primacy of international law. It also reaffirms Singapore's staunch support for the ICJ's important role in upholding international law, fostering the peaceful resolution of disputes, and safeguarding the interests of all countries.”

I AM PROUD TO ENDORSE the intention of the Singapore National Group to the Permanent Court of Arbitration to nominate Ambassador for International Law Rena Lee for election to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2026.

As a small State, Singapore is steadfastly committed to promoting and advancing the international rule of law. The ICJ, as the United Nations' principal judicial organ, plays a vital role in this regard. To this end, we are backing this intended nomination of Ambassador Lee to be a Judge at the ICJ.

Ambassador Lee has distinguished herself in various capacities in the Singapore Government, as a legal advisor and diplomat. Most recently, as the Chief Executive of the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore, she has led her team to strengthen and elevate Singapore's position as a leading intellectual property hub.

In each role, Ambassador Lee brings with her deep legal expertise, an unwavering dedication to upholding the rule of law, a vision for growth and development, and importantly, sensitivity to differing views.

Ambassador Lee's nomination underscores Singapore's enduring commitment to the primacy of international law. It also reaffirms Singapore's staunch support for the ICJ's important role in upholding international law, fostering the peaceful resolution of disputes, and safeguarding the interests of all countries.

I am confident that Ambassador Lee would continue making valuable contributions to the development of international law as a Judge of the ICJ. She has Singapore's full support.

K Shanmugam SC

Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law

Statement of the Minister

I AM PLEASED TO FULLY SUPPORT the intention of the Singapore National Group of the Permanent Court of Arbitration to nominate Ambassador for International Law Rena Lee for election as a Judge of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2026.

This will be the first time a Singaporean is nominated for election as an ICJ Judge since Singapore joined the United Nations in 1965. Ambassador Lee is a distinguished practitioner of international law, who is well-known to the international community. As President of the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), Ambassador Lee demonstrated able leadership of the negotiations which led to the consensus adoption of the BBNJ Agreement. This exemplifies Singapore's proud tradition as a thought leader in the law of the sea, and a trusted bridge-builder in the international community.

Ambassador Lee has over three decades of public service including as a diplomat in The Hague; a legal advisor to and negotiator for the Singapore Government across the full spectrum of international law, particularly law of the sea, climate change and environmental law, international humanitarian law, human rights law, and disarmament law; and as Chief Executive of the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore. She has also served as an elected member of the Legal and Technical Commission of the International Seabed Authority, and is a Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Ambassador Lee embodies the spirit of impartiality, integrity, and independence of mind invoked in the solemn declaration that all ICJ Judges make before assuming their duties. If elected, she will also enhance the diversity of representation and perspectives on the bench. I hope we can count on your support.

Vivian Balakrishnan
Minister for Foreign Affairs



“As President of the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), Ambassador Lee demonstrated able leadership of the negotiations ... This exemplifies Singapore's proud tradition as a thought leader in the law of the sea, and a trusted bridge-builder in the international community.”

Vision Statement

Independent. Thoughtful. Principled.

I AM DEEPLY HUMBLLED and honoured to be Singapore's candidate for election to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The ICJ, as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, is charged with the solemn mission of interpreting, clarifying and developing international law. The unprecedented growth of the Court's docket is an affirmation of the mandate of the Court and the international community's trust that this august institution continues to be instrumental to the maintenance of the world order. If elected to serve, I commit to faithfully uphold this trust.

“ If elected as
a Judge of the ICJ...
I will apply myself
to the work
independently and
impartially, to deliver
meaningful justice in
every matter before
the Court, and provide
actionable legal
guidance to the
international community
at large. ”

States have presented before the Court serious, existential issues, including climate change and other significant crises. The Court that must step up to this challenge has to be one that is diverse in expertise, universal in outlook, and most importantly, ready to listen to all relevant perspectives.

Throughout more than three decades of my professional career, I have served in various capacities as a state negotiator, legal advisor, and diplomat. These roles have allowed me to tangibly live out and practically apply international law beyond the textbook. As a steadfast supporter of the international rule of law, I advocate fidelity to both the letter and spirit of the law in its interpretation and application.

As a state negotiator, I am very familiar with the process of international law making, having participated in the negotiating and drafting of multilateral legal instruments. These include the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol to the ASEAN Charter on Dispute Settlement Mechanism, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, among others.

As a legal advisor, I advise the Singapore Government on the implementation and fulfilment of its international obligations across different international law domains. These have included issues related to boundary delimitation, disarmament law, diplomatic and consular relations law, environmental and climate change law, human rights law, international humanitarian law, intellectual property law and law of the sea.

As a diplomat, I had the privilege of serving as the President of the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), where

Vision Statement

Independent. Thoughtful. Principled.

I led five years of complex negotiations, culminating in the adoption, by consensus, of the landmark BBNJ Agreement. This experience has enriched my perspectives on the plurality of legal traditions and the diversity of state interests, in particular the perspectives of small states. It has also fortified my conviction that inclusive multilateralism and collective commitment to implementation of legal obligations remains a concrete pathway to pragmatic solutions for the transnational problems of our time, and to promote global development, peace and security for a more just world.

If elected as a Judge of the ICJ, I will dedicate myself to contributing further to the development of international law through the Court's jurisprudence, bringing with me the breadth of my practical experience, and appreciation of the unique circumstances and interests of different states. I will apply myself to the work independently and impartially, to deliver meaningful justice in every matter before the Court, and provide actionable legal guidance to the international community at large.

Rina





Ambassador Rena Lee

Ambassador for International Law of the Republic of Singapore

Birth date 28 July 1969

Nationality Singaporean

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION APPOINTMENTS

- 2024 - present **Member**
Panel of Conciliators of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)
Singapore's designated member under Article 12 of the ICSID Convention.
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- 2022 - present **Member**
Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)
Singapore's appointed member under Article 44 of the 1907 Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes.
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- 2020 - present **Member**
List of Arbitrators for the Protocol to the ASEAN Charter on Dispute Settlement Mechanism
Singapore's appointed member under Annex 4 of the Protocol.
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- 2018 - 2023 **President**
United Nations Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
Presided over the successful conclusion of negotiations over five years on a new international agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.
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- 2017 - 2022 **Member**
Legal and Technical Commission of the International Seabed Authority (ISA)
Contributed to the development of the draft regulations, standards and guidelines for mineral resources-related activities in the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole, including regulations, standards and guidelines relating to protection of marine environment. Also reviewed annual reports submitted by contractors.

DIPLOMATIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2023 - present **Ambassador for International Law**
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore
Represent Singapore at international law bodies and meetings, as well as appearing in legal proceedings before international courts/tribunals. Participate in negotiations such as the Diplomatic Conference that adopted the WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge.
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- 2018 - 2023 **Ambassador for Oceans and Law of the Sea Issues and Special Envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs**
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore
Discharged duties as the President of the United Nations Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction and represented Singapore at meetings on oceans and law of the sea, such as the UN Ocean Conference.
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- 2018 - 2020 **Minister-Counsellor**
The Diplomatic Office in The Hague, Republic of Singapore
Served as Singapore's first Minister-Counsellor at The Hague. Advised the Singapore Government on matters relating to international law, and dispute settlement institutions within and beyond the Hague, including the ICJ, PCA and International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT SERVICE

- 2020 - 2025 **Chief Executive**
Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS)
Ministry of Law, Republic of Singapore
Collaborated with the World Intellectual Property Organisation and IP Offices internationally, regionally and bilaterally on issues relevant to the global IP ecosystem, including emerging issues such as frontier technology like AI. Participated in the continued development of systems under various IP treaties, including the Madrid Protocol on Trade Marks, the Patent Cooperation Treaty and the Hague Agreement on Industrial Designs. Oversaw the national IP regime, including initiatives relating to the utilisation of IP for business growth.
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- 2008 - 2018 **Senior State Counsel (2014 – 2018); Deputy Senior State Counsel (2008 – 2014)**
International Affairs Division
Attorney-General's Chambers, Republic of Singapore
State negotiator in bilateral negotiations for boundary delimitation and defence cooperation agreements. State negotiator in multilateral negotiations including the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of ASEAN, the Agreement to establish the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
Advised on law of the sea and maritime law (including passage rights, freedom of navigation and overflight, activities in the exclusive economic zones and high seas, matters pertaining to the International Maritime Organization (IMO)), human rights law (including treaty reporting under the Universal Periodic Review, accession to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination), diplomatic, consular and international organisation privileges and immunities (including negotiation of Host Country Agreements with the World Bank and INTERPOL).

Curriculum Vitae

1992 - 2007 **Deputy Head, International & Operations Law (2001 – 2007);
Senior Legal Counsel (1996 – 2001); Legal Officer (1992 – 1996)**
Ministry of Defence, Republic of Singapore

State negotiator for bilateral defence cooperation agreements, as well as multilateral instruments including the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, and the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Advised on international humanitarian and operational law issues (including use of force, rules of engagement, accession to the Genocide Convention), disarmament law (including application of the Chemical Weapons Convention), law of the sea (including passage rights, freedom of navigation and overflight), status of forces agreements.

OTHER APPOINTMENTS

2025 - present **Chairperson**
Governing Board, Centre for International Law (CIL)
National University of Singapore (NUS)

Chair of the governing body of CIL, a leading research institute for the promotion and development of international law.

Member

Expert Group on the Future Development of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)

The Expert Group is tasked with reflecting on the PCA's historical contributions, evaluating its contemporary relevance, and charting a strategic course for its future, and will report its findings and recommendations to the PCA Secretary-General.

HONOURS

2025 **2024 Manley-Bendall Maritime Personality of the Year (Prix Personnalité maritime de l'année)**
French Maritime Academy (Académie de marine)

2024 • **Elisabeth Haub Award for Environmental Law and Diplomacy**
• **World IP Review (WIPR) Diversity Top 100 – Influential Women of IP**
• **TIME Magazine's Top 100 Most Influential People**

2023 • **Public Administration Medal (Gold)**
Prime Minister's Office, Singapore

2019 • **Public Administration Medal (Silver)**
Prime Minister's Office, Singapore

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

1998 Master of Laws (LL.M)
National University of Singapore, Faculty of Law

1992 Bachelor of Laws (LL.B)
National University of Singapore, Faculty of Law

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

1993 Member, Singapore Academy of Law

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

Rena Lee (2021). The Journey to Realisation. In Myron H. Nordquist and Ronan Long (Eds.), *Marine Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction*. Brill

Marise Cremona, David Kleimann, Joris Larik, Rena Lee, Pascal Vennesson (2015). *ASEAN's External Agreements – Law, Practice and the Quest for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press

SELECT RECENT PRESENTATIONS

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| 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keynote speech, “International Humanitarian Law and the Governance of Emerging Technologies”, UNIDIR-RSIS Regional Consultation on the Application of IHL to Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, Singapore• Keynote address, International Law Year in Review 2024 Conference, Centre for International Law (CIL), Singapore <hr/> |
| 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation, “Participation in International Law and the Multilateral Approach to Justice”, Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies, Leiden Law School, The Hague• Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture, “Reaching shore: Multilateralism and the Value of International Law”, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala, Sweden• Keynote speech, International Law Association Singapore Lecture, “The Growing Access to International Law”, Singapore• In Conversation: BBNJ Dispute Settlement provisions, ICJ, The Hague, Netherlands• Presentation on IP Valuation and Financing, Third Belt and Road Intellectual Property Conference, Beijing, China• Presentation on Innovations in Dispute Settlement, PCA Commemorative Event, Singapore• Class on BBNJ, ASEAN Law and Policy Academy, Centre for International Law (CIL), Singapore• Presentation on “Implementing the BBNJ Agreement”, International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC) Plenary: Ensuring a Connected Future, Singapore <hr/> |
| 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keynote Panel on “Leading Innovation for all”, ChIPs Global Summit, San Francisco, USA• Presentation on “BBNJ Dispute Settlement”, ITLOS-ROK Workshop for Legal Advisers, online• Presentation, Panel on “Reaching Beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction”, American Society for International Law (ASIL) Annual Meeting, Washington DC, USA• Presentation on “International Negotiations”, Government Attorneys Interest Group, ASIL Annual Meeting, Washington DC, USA• Conversation “In Celebration of a new BBNJ Agreement” with Ambassador Tommy Koh, CIL, Singapore |



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This experience has enriched my perspectives on the plurality of legal traditions and the diversity of state interests, in particular the perspectives of small states.”

AMBASSADOR RENA LEE

INDEPENDENT.
THOUGHTFUL.
PRINCIPLED.





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