

## African diversity champion joins Burford board

Cosmo Sanderson  
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**Rukia Baruti**, a long-time promoter of diversity in arbitration and the secretary general of the African Arbitration Association, has joined the board of Burford Capital.

Baruti is joining the New York and London-listed funder as an independent non-executive director, it was announced today.

Burford CEO **Christopher Bogart** says Baruti is “a highly accomplished leader in the arbitration space with deep international expertise.”

“With this appointment, we also reiterate Burford’s commitment to achieving greater gender and racial diversity in the business of law.”

Baruti is an independent arbitrator and qualified solicitor in England and Wales. A Tanzanian national, she lived in Kenya and Uganda before moving to the UK. In 2006, she began a four-year stint in the international arbitration group of SJ Berwin, which later merged with King & Wood Mallesons.

In 2011, she [launched](#) Africa International Legal Awareness (AILA), a project to provide annual training for lawyers advising African governments on international investment treaty law and arbitration. AILA later [published an online directory](#) featuring African practitioners with arbitration expertise.

Baruti [co-founded](#) the African Arbitration Association, headquartered in Rwanda’s capital Kigali, in 2018.

She has also served as vice president of the LCIA Africa users council.

Baruti will also sit on Burford’s nominating and governance committee, which reviews and makes recommendations regarding the composition of the board and its committees, and also oversees environmental, social and governance matters generally.

She is Burford’s fifth new non-executive director since 2020, and the funder says her appointment completes a planned refresh of its board of directors ahead of schedule.

The funder had previously sought to ensure that its directors are at least 30% female “as soon as reasonably possible”. Following two expected retirements in 2023 and 2024, Burford said it will exceed that goal.

Baruti says she is proud to be the newest member of the board at Burford, continuing that she has been aware of the funder’s “stellar reputation” for some time.

**Robert Volterra** of London disputes boutique Volterra Fietta has known Baruti for almost two decades, since she invited him to give a presentation to the students at an international law society she had founded at Birkbeck, University of London while completing her LLB there.

He says that Baruti – who later obtained a doctorate from the University of Geneva – is a well-known arbitrator, active both in Europe and in Africa, who has “long been committed to training a new generation of African arbitration lawyers.”

“Burford was astute to bring someone with Rukia’s depth and breadth of experience on board. This is also a welcome progression for increasing diversity in the world of international arbitration.”

In 2018, Burford launched an initiative called The Equity Project, which incentivises firms and Fortune 500 companies using diverse lawyers.

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