

Rising Star: Covington's Paris Aboro

By **Caroline Simson**

Law360 (August 10, 2026, 4:00 PM EDT) -- Paris Aboro played a key role on the Covington & Burling LLP team that secured a \$5 billion arbitral award for Ukraine's state-owned oil and gas company after Russia seized its Crimean assets, landing her among the international arbitration attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

The biggest case of her career:

Aboro helped to convince an international tribunal in April 2023 to award Naftogaz \$5 billion following the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014. Prior to that date, Naftogaz was the largest participant in natural gas exploration, production, transport, storage, processing and distribution on the Crimean Peninsula, court records say.

Covington says the award is the largest to date in the Crimea-related arbitrations against Russia.

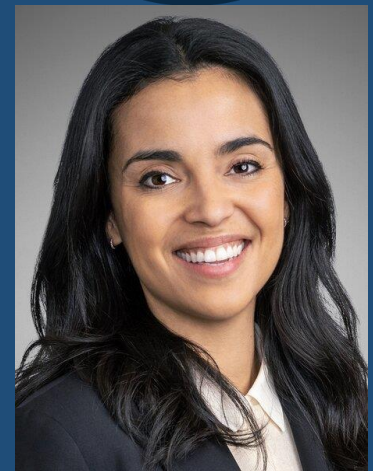
Aboro told Law360 that the case has been the biggest of her career so far in terms of dollars awarded. It was also a case where she was involved from the very start of her time at Covington in 2017. She said that while she took a two-year break from the firm while working in the Netherlands, once she came back, she rejoined the team to work on the damages phase of the case.

She's been involved in enforcing the award, as well, she said.

"So it's been one of those cases that I've really been able to see the full life cycle of, which has been fantastic as an experience," she said. "It was really an early exposure to investor-state arbitration and obviously involved some complex and novel legal arguments. So, in that respect, it was also legally demanding."

One of the unique challenges of the case was the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia. At the time of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Aboro said, the legal team was actually at

2026



Paris Aboro
Covington

Age: 37

Home base: London

Position: Special counsel

Law school: The City Law School,
University of London

First job after law school: Barrister at
Henderson Chambers

the Peace Palace in The Hague conducting the hearing on damages.

"Certainly one of the most challenging moments in my career was our work on that case in that moment," she said. "Our hearing had started on Monday, and it was on the morning of the Thursday that Russia launched the full scale invasion ... the news came in very early in the morning, and immediately our client and co-counsel were fighting to get back to Ukraine."

"It wasn't really a professional moment so much as a deeply personal experience to have with co-counsel and friends," she added. "The flip side — on the professional side — is that the client and our co-counsel were extremely adamant that the case needed to continue, that we needed to continue to move forward, and obviously we did."

Her most interesting case:

Aboro worked as a member of the Covington team that secured what the firm refers to as a "landmark victory" in the Court of Arbitration for Sport for the Ukrainian Chess Federation against the Chess Federation of Russia. In its ruling in March, the sport tribunal ordered the Russian federation to stop scheduling global chess events in regions internationally recognized as part of Ukraine, including Crimea and areas of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia.

The ruling superseded a €45,000 (\$51,183) penalty handed down by the International Chess Federation.

Aboro said that in one sense, the case overlapped with her broader practice, which involves acting on behalf of Ukrainian entities before the International Court of Justice. But the case was also quite different from those she usually works on because it was a sports arbitration case, she said.

The case was "very specifically focused on the world of chess and chess governance, which was not a world with which I had a huge amount of familiarity before, and certainly, I was not familiar with the deep history of the relationship between chess and politics, which I've now spent a bit of time kind of looking into, and it's just really fascinating," she said.

Her proudest moment:

Aboro has represented Ukraine in several cases against Russia at the International Court of Justice: one as part of a pro bono team on a case filed against Moscow following the events of February 2022, and one as a member of a Covington team that secured what the firm calls "an unprecedented victory" for Ukraine in separate proceedings against Russia related to its post-2014 conduct in Crimea and eastern Ukraine.

In the latter case, the ruling in question holds that Russia violated the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism by failing to cooperate with Ukraine in the investigation of terrorism financing offenses and the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by reducing the availability of education in the Ukrainian language in Crimea after 2014.

"It's been a real privilege to represent Ukraine before the world court, and to play just even a small part in trying to hold Russia accountable for the violations of international law that it continues to this day," she said.

What motivates her:

Aboro says that one thing that particularly motivates her is figuring out the best way to craft an argument.

"I'm a disputes lawyer through and through," she said. "I really enjoy taking complex law and facts and distilling them into clear and persuasive narrative. I find it both analytical and creative, so it exercises two different parts of my brain in that respect, which I really appreciate."

She noted that the exercise is particularly interesting in the arbitration context, given the often diverse legal backgrounds of the arbitrators.

"It forces you to think how your arguments are going to land with people that may be coming towards the problem and approaching it in a different way," she said. Another "core motivator is, obviously, just working with the clients ... and supporting clients as they navigate disputes that are genuinely consequential for them."

--As told to Caroline Simson. Editing by Karin Roberts.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2026 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,100 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2026, to be eligible for this year's award.