

# New disputes players in Russia and Kazakhstan

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**Rybalkin, Gortsunyan and Partners** has established a new arbitration group, while two experienced practitioners have established Kazakhstan's first disputes boutique.

**Rybalkin, Gortsunyan & Partners** (RGP) was [established](#) in September 2018 by a group of lawyers from the Moscow branch of **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld**, and now counts 26 contentious experts in its ranks. It is experienced in cases at all levels of the Russian courts, as well as foreign disputes involving the United Kingdom, United States and British Virgin Islands (BVI).

RGP has established a new arbitration practice group in its Moscow headquarters, with a team of seven new lawyers, led by two partners.

Heading up the new group is international arbitration partner is **Dmitry Dyakin**, who has represented governments, state-owned, domestic and foreign corporations, on disputes involving the oil and gas, financial services and construction sectors.

Dyakin has advised under an array of arbitral rules, including those of the **ICC International Court of Arbitration** (ICC), the **London Court of International Arbitration** (LCIA), and the **International Centre for Dispute Resolution** (ICDR).

Before his arrival at RGP, Dyakin had a nearly 14-year tenure at **Magisters**, a well-known firm operating in Russia and across the former Soviet Union. There he became managing partner of the Moscow office and co-headed the firm's international arbitration and litigation practice.

Joining Dyakin at the partner level is **Vladimir Pestrikov**, who has a practice concentrated in commercial, investment agreement and insolvency disputes, frequently involving parallel legal proceedings in multiple jurisdictions.

He has previously counselled under a variety of arbitration institutional rules such as the **United Nations Commission on International Trade Law**

(UNCITRAL) as well as the ICC and LCIA.

Pestrikov's early career includes short stints as an in-house lawyer at oil companies **JSC Zarubezhneft** and **SIBUR** in Moscow, and as a foreign law associate at Bryan Cave (now **Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner**) in London. He then spent more than three years as an associate at Magisters, and most recently had a nine-year tenure at **Egorov Puginsky Afanasiev & Partners** where he became senior associate.

Of the five non-partner arrivals, counsel **Dmitry Kaysin** is an experienced adviser on investment disputes involving governments. **Stanislav Karandasov** and **Vsevolod Taraskin** are senior associates: Karandasov's practice focuses on cross-border disputes including insolvency and enforcement matters, while Taraskin counts contentious energy and natural resources matters as a key area of expertise. They are joined at the associate and junior associate level by **Timur Abushakhmanov** and **Evgeniy Voronin** respectively.

Co-founding partner of RGP **Ilya Rybalkin** emphasised the firm's substantial expansion in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, and praised the new arrivals as "outstanding professionals".

Developments on the Moscow legal scene include the [arrival](#) of an English barrister from **One Essex Court** to serve as co-head of international disputes at Egorov Puginsky Afansiev & Partners in May, while in December 2019 **Allen & Overy** [recruited](#) an arbitration specialist from **Norton Rose Fulbright**.

## A KAZAKH FIRST

Elsewhere in the CIS, two experienced practitioners have established Kazakhstan's first dispute resolution boutique, **Tukulov & Kassilgov Litigation** in Almaty.

**Bakhyt Tukulov** has expertise in litigation and arbitration involving state entities and foreign corporations. His areas of strength include investment treaty disputes and enforcement of arbitral awards.

Tukulov was an in-house lawyer at Kazakh mobile operator **GSM Kazakhstan**, and subsequently spent four years as an associate at Salans (now **Dentons**). Most recently he had an eight-year tenure in the Almaty office of Eurasian firm **GRATA**, where he was promoted to partner.

His joint founding partner **Ravil Kassilgov** has advised on a raft of commercial disputes concerning joint ventures, shareholder rights and data protection. Taxation, construction and natural resources are among his other areas of focus.

His work highlights include advising a number of hedge funds in a tax dispute involving a local financial institution. His client list also includes educational institutions, investors and manufacturers.

Kassilgov worked as a senior associate at local firm **Zanger** for more than nine years, where he became a senior associate. Most recently he was managing partner of his own legal practice **Kassilgov & Partners** for nearly five years.

In April **Dentons** [promoted](#) six disputes lawyers to partner, one of which is an energy and natural resources expert based in the Almaty office.