





Vesna K. Harasic-Yaksic

Partner



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A former U.S. Department of Justice trial attorney, Vesna represents multinational corporations, small and mid-sized businesses, and executives in high-stakes criminal, civil, and regulatory enforcement actions as well as global and domestic alternative dispute resolution proceedings.

Vesna's areas of expertise include, among others:

- Anti-money laundering (AML) and Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) investigations, prosecutions, and civil enforcement actions;
- Administrative, civil, and criminal forfeiture and other asset recovery proceedings; and
- Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), Foreign Extortion Prevention Act (FEPA), and other anti-corruption matters with a particular focus in the Latin American region.

Vesna also has significant experience counseling clients across a wide range of industries on corporate compliance matters, including, but not limited to, effective anti-money laundering controls, FCPA risk areas, and best practices for preserving electronic data.

For two consecutive years, Vesna has been recognized in *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch* in White-Collar Criminal Defense.

Representative Matters

Notable Accomplishments:

- Secured declination by DOJ Antitrust Division for a Fortune 500 Company.

Practice Areas

Anti-Money Laundering
Cyber and Privacy Investigations, Incidents & Enforcement
FCPA and Anti-Corruption
Global Disputes
Litigation
National Security
White Collar Defense & Government Investigations

Credentials

Education

J.D., *cum laude*, American University
Washington College of Law
B.A., Cornell University

Law Journals

Editor-in-Chief, *American University Business Law Review*

Bar and Court Memberships

District of Columbia Bar
Maryland Bar

Certifications

Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist (CAMS)

Languages

Spanish

- Secured declination from DOJ Fraud Section for a political strategist.
- Obtained favorable settlement for European cryptocurrency trading platform in SEC/CFTC litigation.
- Obtained probationary sentence for an individual convicted of union embezzlement in the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.
- Obtained dismissal by relator in *qui tam* suit against a large defense contractor in the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Litigation and Investigations:

- Represented a Chief Operating Officer of a company in connection with bribery allegations involving Department of Veteran Affairs contracts.
- Represented various individuals in FCPA investigation involving Afghanistan.
- Represented European cryptocurrency trading platform in money laundering investigation and related administrative forfeiture action.
- Represented entity in Special Counsel investigation.
- Represented an individual in connection with an investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia relating to conduit campaign contributions.
- Represented executive in an investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia involving allegations of public corruption and procurement fraud.
- Represented an insurance company in an FCA investigation involving alleged false certifications of eligibility for government contracts.
- Representing HUBZone contractor related to potential False Claims Act violations.
- Representing a foreign financial executive in connection with parallel SEC/DOJ investigations of accounting fraud.
- Representing an international company in an Anti-Terrorism Act suit arising from the performance of government defense contracts in Afghanistan.
- Represented a medical device manufacturer in a complex internal investigation concerning allegations of off-label promotion.
- Representing a government contractor in connection with an Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation.
- Represented a company in a time fraud investigation involving a waste treatment facility.
- Represented a company operating in Iraq related to false certifications under a large government contract.
- Represented a military contractor and its executives against allegations of fraud, misappropriation, and business torts.

Alternative Dispute Resolution:

- Representing a company in domestic arbitration involving environmental remediation issues.
- Represented a large real estate developer in an arbitration seated in Singapore involving a joint venture agreement to build an entire foreign city.

Corporate Compliance Counseling:

- Currently advising various companies on Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) registration requirements and developments.
- Advising a Fortune 500 company on antitrust compliance policy and electronic data preservation issues.
- Advised international association on the applicability of money services business (MSB) regulations in connection with a payment platform.
- Advised video game developer on the implementation of adequate AML/BSA controls for in-game currency.
- Counseled asset management firm on AML risks associated with investment opportunity.
- Analyzed the applicability of AML rules to gift card program of a public company.
- Advised European trading platform on implementation of "Know Your Customer" procedures for U.S. customers.
- Counseled a scientific research organization regarding its AML compliance obligations in relation to a government subcontract.
- Advise multiple clients on compliance issues related to law enforcement data requests, including responding to subpoenas, 2703(d) orders, and search warrants.

Trial Attorney, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section, U.S. Department of Justice (2015-2017):

- Represented the United States in complex money laundering prosecutions and grand jury investigations, including the investigation of a large-scale money laundering organization operating a black-market peso exchange. Those investigations involved grand jury subpoenas, search and seizure warrants, wiretaps, surveillance, and other law enforcement tools.
- Represented the United States in civil forfeiture matters including the successful forfeiture of nearly \$1 million dollars in insurance fraud proceeds.
- Assisted in the investigation of financial institutions for AML/BSA violations and failures to implement effective anti-money laundering compliance programs and controls.

Special Assistant United States Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia (2016-2017):

- Represented the United States in the prosecution of an individual for fraud and money laundering offenses involving U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) foreign assistance funds in Africa.

- Provided forfeiture assistance to AUSAs in more than 30 federal criminal cases including fraud, bank robbery, narcotics trafficking, and sex offenses.
- Represented the United States in a civil forfeiture proceeding against an aircraft engine intended for illegal re-export to Iran in violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and other U.S. sanctions violations.
- Participated in a grand jury investigation of a foreign company involved in money laundering and IEEPA violations.

Special Assistant United States Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia (2016):

- Lead counsel for the prosecution of an individual charged with bulk cash smuggling and false statements.
- Represented the United States in the prosecution of a large-scale visa fraud scheme.
- Represented the United States in the prosecution of various misdemeanors on federal land.
- Represented the United States in supervised release and probation violation hearings.

Professional Experience

- Trial Attorney, U.S. Department of Justice, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section (2015-2017)
- Special Assistant United States Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia (2016-2017)
- Special Assistant United States Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia (2016)
- Summer Honors Law Intern, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (2013)
- Criminal Law Intern Investigator, Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (2012)

Affiliations

- Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) and Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia (HBA-DC)
- Women's White Collar Defense Association (WWCDA)
- Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists (ACAMS)
- Cornell Club of Washington
- 2020 Pathfinder, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)

Recognitions

- Included in *The Best Lawyers in America* directory of "Ones to Watch" for Criminal Defense: White-Collar (2023-2024)