AFRICA



Willy Sigei, Immigration Attaché
High Commission of Kenya

Willy Kipyegon Sigei is an Immigration Attaché at the Kenya High Commission in London where he has served since June 2021. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and a Master's degree in Public Policy and Administration from Kenyatta University.

He joined the Directorate of Immigration Services in 2005 as an Immigration Officer II and has progressively risen through the ranks to Assistant Director. Throughout his career, he has served in various immigration stations, including border points and airports, gaining extensive experience in immigration administration and public service delivery.

At the Kenya High Commission, Mr Sigei has distinguished himself through his dedication to consular services, with a particular focus on the welfare and protection of Kenyans in the UK. He is recognised for his compassionate and professional approach, often going beyond his official responsibilities to assist vulnerable citizens, support families experiencing bereavement or distress, and facilitate access to essential consular services.

His commitment to inclusive service delivery includes assisting persons with disabilities who are unable to visit the Mission for biometric capture during passport and national identity card applications. He also supports travellers facing urgent travel documentation challenges, often beyond normal working hours.

In addition, Mr Sigei actively promotes public awareness of citizenship, immigration requirements and travel documentation through consular webinars and community engagement. He has also played an instrumental role in organising and delivering mobile consular services, bringing essential services closer to Kenyans living in different cities across the UK.

Mr Sigei's professional values are grounded in integrity, teamwork, empathy and a strong commitment to public service. For his willingness to go beyond the call of duty to ensure that Kenyans abroad receive accessible, responsive and dignified consular assistance, he is a worthy candidate for Consul of the Year for Africa.

AMERICAS



Paulina Cruz Aroca, Consul General
Embassy of Chile

Ms Paulina Cruz Aroca has been part of the Embassy of Chile since 2024 and has shown the utmost dedication in her role to colleagues and citizens alike, serving the Chilean community here in the UK with warmth, professionalism and an unwavering commitment.

As Consul General, she oversees a huge range of matters, from supporting Chilean citizens and providing essential services, to representing Chile at key diplomatic events. No two days are the same, and she continuously shows strong leadership and pride in her work.

Her leadership was especially evident from November and December 2025, when she took on the enormous responsibility of organising Chile's general election at the Embassy. Thanks to her guidance, more than 15,000 Chileans in the UK were able to register and exercise their right to vote from overseas.

Ms Cruz was also nominated for the Women in Diplomacy Awards 2025, in recognition of her outstanding contributions and commitment to excellence in diplomatic service.

We are so grateful for everything Ms Cruz has given the Embassy so far. She and the Consulate have seen just about everything, yet she meets every challenge with a plan and a great sense of humour. She is a worthy candidate for Consul of the Year for The Americas.

ASIA



Ronald Arafah, 1st Secretary for Protocol and Consular Affairs
Embassy of Indonesia

Mr Ronald Arafah has served as First Secretary for Protocol and Consular Affairs at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in London since mid-2023. In this role, he provides consular services and assistance to Indonesian nationals in the UK and Ireland. The community he serves is diverse, comprising professionals, students, mixed-nationality families, and migrant workers across various sectors, including

domestic work, agriculture and maritime industries.

Prior to his current assignment, Mr Arafah developed extensive experience in consular affairs and the protection of Indonesian citizens abroad, including in countries affected by conflict or natural disasters in Asia, Europe, and Africa. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he also contributed to efforts to support Indonesian seafarers stranded in different parts of the world, helping to address their urgent needs and facilitate their safe return.

Throughout his career, Mr Arafah has approached consular service with professionalism, adaptability, and a strong sense of responsibility. His experience in diverse and often challenging circumstances has reinforced his commitment to a compassionate, practical, and people-centred approach to protecting the rights and welfare of Indonesian nationals abroad. In recognition of his dedication and contributions in this field, he received an award from Indonesia's Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2024.

In his current role in London, Mr Arafah continues to focus on safeguarding the rights, welfare, and interests of Indonesians in the UK and Ireland. Working closely with colleagues at the Embassy and under the guidance of its leadership, he is committed to delivering reliable consular support and accessible public services. Through efforts to educate and empower the Indonesian community, he remains dedicated to assisting Indonesian nationals with professionalism, care and respect.

For these reasons, Mr Arafah merits his nomination as Consul of the Year for Asia.

CARIBBEAN



Sasha Wedderburn, Minister Counsellor

High Commission of Jamaica

Miss Sasha Wedderburn has been nominated for Consul of the Year in recognition of her exemplary leadership, unwavering commitment to service and outstanding representation of Jamaica in rendering consular assistance to Jamaicans and other nationalities across the Caribbean Diaspora.

In a professional setting where individuals often encounter people at some of the most challenging moments of their lives, Miss Wedderburn consistently demonstrates empathy, patience and understanding. Whether assisting nationals in distress, supporting vulnerable individuals, or responding to urgent and complex situations, she approaches each case with the same level of diligence and genuine concern.

Miss Wedderburn has gone above and beyond what could reasonably be expected. Her commitment to public service is evident in the countless hours she dedicates to resolving issues, guiding individuals through difficult circumstances, and finding practical solutions to complex challenges.

She has demonstrated strong leadership, sound judgment and an ability to build positive relationships with diplomatic colleagues across the divide, government partners, community organizations, and stakeholders. Her collaborative approach fosters teamwork and inspires those around her and those she supervises to strive for excellence.

Miss Wedderburn continues to remain calm, focused, solutions-oriented and effective under pressure. Regardless of the complexity of a situation, she consistently displays professionalism and resilience. Her integrity is beyond question and she represents Jamaica with dignity and distinction, earning the respect and trust of colleagues.

For her outstanding service, exceptional character and unwavering commitment to helping others Miss Sasha Wedderburn is deserving of nomination for the honour of the Consul of the Year for the Caribbean.

EUROPE



Dóra Urbányi, Consul

Embassy of Belgium

Despite being a junior diplomat, Ms Urbányi successfully manages one of the largest and busiest visa sections of the Belgian diplomatic network with remarkable professionalism, competence and dedication. She has consistently demonstrated exceptional organisational and leadership skills, introducing more efficient procedures that have significantly reduced waiting times while improving the overall quality of service and customer experience.

Beyond her outstanding operational achievements, Ms Urbányi is an excellent manager and team leader. She is deeply committed to supporting her staff, creating a positive working environment, and bringing out the very best in every member of her team. Her leadership is characterised by empathy, professionalism, and a genuine commitment to the wellbeing and development of her colleagues.

Ms Urbányi is also an absolute pleasure to work with. She is approachable, collaborative and always willing to make herself available to assist colleagues, regardless of how busy her own workload may be.

Her positive attitude and strong sense of service make her a role model within the Embassy.

What makes Ms Urbányi's achievements even more impressive is that she has reached this level of excellence at such an early stage of her diplomatic career. She has already demonstrated extraordinary competence, maturity and leadership potential. There is no doubt that she has a very bright future ahead of her, and we have the highest expectations for her continued success in the diplomatic service.

For her outstanding performance, dedication to public service, exemplary leadership and exceptional potential, Ms Urbányi is wholeheartedly recommended for the title of Consul of the Year for Europe.

MIDDLE EAST



Sima Doovdevani
Consul General
Embassy of Israel

Since July 2022, Sima Doovdevani has served as Head of the Consular Section at the Embassy of Israel in the UK, delivering significant improvements in service accessibility, responsiveness and support for Israeli citizens abroad.

Ms Doovdevani began her diplomatic career in 1999 as a Situation Room Coordinator at Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She subsequently served as Consul in Beijing and Guangzhou, held a senior position within the Security Division, and led the Israelis Abroad Department in Jerusalem. She holds a BA in Education Studies from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Under Ms Doovdevani's leadership, the Consular Section has improved access to essential services through extended appointment hours, flexible booking arrangements and a daily WhatsApp service, enabling faster communication and more timely responses. She is also overseeing a comprehensive renovation of the Consulate to increase capacity and improve the visitor experience. Ms Doovdevani's leadership style promotes accountability, teamwork and professional development by assigning clear responsibilities and encouraging empathetic communication and practical problem-solving.

Ms Doovdevani believes that consular assistance must begin with the individual not the procedure, ensuring that every citizen is treated with dignity, understanding and compassion. She has embedded this principle in staff training and practical service delivery, particularly for vulnerable citizens. Recognising the challenges faced by elderly citizens and those with limited mobility when undertaking procedures for life certificates and identity verification, she facilitates identity verification by WhatsApp video call where appropriate and permissible. Where an in-person visit is necessary, she ensures that she or a team member visits the citizen at home.

Ms Doovdevani provides emergency consular assistance around the clock. In one particularly challenging case, she personally supported an Israeli woman experiencing a serious mental health crisis after arriving in London and being taken to an immigration detention facility. Following the woman's transfer to a psychiatric hospital, Ms Doovdevani continued providing practical support, including delivering essential clothing and other items. This demonstrates her willingness to go beyond routine responsibilities to protect vulnerable citizens and ensure they receive appropriate care. Her experience also includes complex repatriation and medical evacuation cases.

Support for bereaved families residing in the UK is a priority for the Consulate. To assist with this, Ms Doovdevani introduced an Excel-based tracking system to help the Consular Section maintain contact with bereaved families and anticipate their needs . Reminders ahead of annual memorial dates and timely communication about commemorative arrangements and practical assistance ensure families feel remembered and supported.

Following the attacks of 7 October, she organised a gathering at the Embassy for Israeli students experiencing emotional and social challenges, including antisemitism on university campuses. The initiative provided an opportunity for connection, mutual support and a stronger sense of community.

Responding to challenges posed by the closure of Israel's diplomatic mission in Ireland and the challenges for Israeli citizens in accessing consular services, Ms Doovdevani actively advocated for Israeli citizens affected by the closure, raising concerns with the relevant authorities and exploring alternatives to reduce the burden of travelling long distances for essential consular services.

Ms Doovdevani combines operational leadership with genuine compassion and personal commitment. Her initiatives have improved access to consular assistance, strengthened support for vulnerable citizens and bereaved families, and demonstrated an unwavering dedication to the welfare of Israelis abroad. Her professionalism, initiative and humanity make her a strong candidate for the Consul of the Year – Middle East Award.