



## **Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Briefing**

### **The Battle for Mosul: Protection Issues**

#### **Panelists**



**Sahr Muhammedally** is Senior Program Manager for the MENA & South Asia Program at the Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC). Sahr manages CIVIC's work on civilian protection and harm mitigation in the Middle East and South Asia. In this position, Sahr advises militaries and governments on civilian harm mitigation policies and trainings. Sahr has worked for over a decade in the fields of armed conflict, human rights, and counterterrorism in Afghanistan, China, Iraq, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Syria. Prior to joining CIVIC, Sahr worked with Human Rights Watch and Human Rights First and practiced law in New York with Gibbons PC. Sahr is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College and Brooklyn Law School.

**Amanda Catanzano** is the Senior Director for International Programs Policy and Advocacy for the International Rescue Committee (IRC), focused on country-level operational barriers and the challenges faced by the people the IRC seeks to assist. She came to the IRC from a career in the U.S. government, as the director for strategic planning at the National Security Council, where she developed policy options for the President and his national security team on responses to the Arab Spring and U.S. engagement in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. Prior to the National Security Council, Amanda was a member of the Secretary of State's Policy Planning staff, and special assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State, covering South and Central Asia with a focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan. In all of these roles, she provided expert analysis, developed policy objectives and strategies for their achievement; and coordinated with senior leadership across the National Security Council, State Department, USAID, and the Department of Defense. Amanda holds an MA in American Foreign Policy and International Economics from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.



**Elisabeth Koek** is a Ph.D. candidate with the Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway, and is currently based in Iraq where she works for the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) as the Advocacy Adviser. During the past eight years, Elisabeth has worked in the Gaza Strip and Ramallah for NRC and Al-Haq, a Palestinian human rights organisation, as well as in Liberia for the UN peacekeeping mission, and in South Africa on socio-economic rights issues. Elisabeth started her legal career in Amsterdam and New York in corporate law and holds an LL.M in public international law from King's College London, as well as an LL.M in corporate law from the University of Leiden Law School in the Netherlands.



**Sarah Margon** is the Washington Director at Human Rights Watch. Prior to joining Human Rights Watch, Margon was associate director of sustainable security and peacebuilding at the Center for American Progress, where she researched and wrote on a wide range of issues including civilian protection, conflict prevention, humanitarian relief, and the rule of law. Margon also served as senior foreign policy advisor to Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) and as staff director to the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs. She has been a guest on various national and international media programs and has published op-eds in a wide range of outlets from the Washington Post to Foreign Policy. Margon holds a graduate degree from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service and an undergraduate degree from Wesleyan University (Connecticut).

## Moderator



**Christopher M. Blanchard** is a Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs at the Congressional Research Service (CRS) where his work emphasizes the roles, responsibilities, and prerogatives of Congress in shaping U.S. foreign policy. His current projects focus on Iraq, the conflict in Syria, the Islamic State organization and related issues, including U.S. foreign assistance, arms sale and security assistance policy, and the conduct of oversight. Mr. Blanchard joined CRS as a Presidential Management Fellow in 2004 and holds degrees from Boston College and Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.