



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

Witness Biographies

Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka

Panel I



Ambika Satkunanathan is a human rights lawyer based in Sri Lanka who is currently a Fellow of the Open Society Foundations. From Oct 2015 to March 2020, she was a Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, where she led the first ever national study of prisons. Her report on drug control, detention and rehabilitation in Sri Lanka, the first such study, was published in August 2021 by Harm Reduction International. She is a member of the Expert Panel of the Trial Watch Project of the Clooney Foundation and a member of the Network of Experts of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime. Her publications include contributions to the Oxford Handbook of Gender & Conflict, the Routledge Handbook on Human Rights in South Asia, and Contemporary South Asia. She is an affiliate of the Eleos Justice Centre, Faculty of Law, Monash University, Australia



Sondra Anton is a J.D. candidate at Harvard Law School, where she is the Co-President of Advocates for Human Rights and a Student Attorney in the International Human Rights Clinic. She specializes in the field of international human rights law and international criminal law, focusing particularly on the topic of justice and accountability for victims of mass atrocity. Sondra, who is originally from North Carolina, holds an M.Phil. in Politics and Comparative Government from the University of Oxford (New College) and was a William H. Danforth Scholar at Washington University in St. Louis. For the past year and a half, Sondra has led a project team within the International Human Rights Clinic that works with a wide network of partners seeking accountability for widespread violations of international law committed against the Sri Lankan Tamil community during the country's civil war.



Shreen Abdul Saroor is a co-founder of Mannar Women's Development Federation and Women's Action Network, a collective of nine women's groups that work on advancing women's rights, research and documentation, and promoting women's engagement in law reforms while improving women's access to justice through legal aid, shelter provision, livelihood assistance and awareness raising in the north and east of Sri Lanka. She was awarded the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law in 2017 and the United Nations Development Programme's N-Peace Award. She is an Ashoka Fellow. She has a few publications, including *Our Struggles and Our Stories*, a collection of research papers facilitated and edited by her, which looks at women's movement building in the north and east during the days of armed struggle and post-war. Her most recent publication is the book, *Muslim in Post-war Sri Lanka: Repression, Resistance & Reform*. She regularly writes about access to justice and minority rights issues in the media.



Neil DeVotta, Ph.D., is a Professor in Politics and International Affairs at Wake Forest University. His research interests include Asian security and politics, ethnoreligious nationalism, ethnic conflict resolution, and democratic transition and consolidation. He is the author of *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* and editor of *Understanding Contemporary India* (2nd edition) and *An Introduction to South Asian Politics*, in addition to authoring numerous articles. He has also consulted for a number of organizations, including the United States Agency for International Development, Freedom House, Bertelsmann Stiftung, and Global Center for Pluralism.



Carolyn Nash is the Asia Advocacy Director for Amnesty International USA. Prior to joining Amnesty, Carolyn lived for six years in Myanmar, where she managed human rights and governance programs for Trocaire and authored #YouthWagaingPeace, a guide to youth-led prevention of violent extremism published by UNESCO. She has also lived and worked on human rights programming in Indonesia, East Timor, Kenya, and Uganda. She was a 2017 Pacific Delegate with the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs and the 2018 Southeast Asia Fellow for Young Professionals in Foreign Policy. Carolyn received her M.A. in International Relations and Economics with a focus on Politics and Governance from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and her B.A. in English literature from Columbia University.



John Sifton is the Asia Advocacy Director at Human Rights Watch. He has previously served as a researcher and as Acting Deputy Washington Director. He focuses on South and Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Middle East, and terrorism and counter-terrorism issues worldwide. Sifton began working at Human Rights Watch in 2001, first as a researcher on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and then as the senior researcher on terrorism and counterterrorism. He founded a public interest investigation firm, One World Research, which he directed from 2007 to 2010. In 2000 and 2001, Sifton worked for the International Rescue Committee, primarily in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and

in 1999 at a refugee advocacy organization in Albania and Kosovo. He holds a law degree from New York University School of Law and a bachelor's degree from St. John's College, Annapolis.