



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

Jammu and Kashmir in Context

Panel I



Anurima Bhargava is a Commissioner on the U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) appointed to the Commission on December 11, 2018, by Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, for a term ending on May 19, 2020, and a civil rights lawyer with extensive experience advocating for members of underrepresented communities. Before founding Anthem of Us, where she currently serves as President, Bhargava was the Chief of the Educational Opportunities Section of the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice. Prior to joining the Justice Department in 2010, Bhargava served as the Director of the Education Practice at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, where she worked to expand educational access and opportunities for students of color. She previously worked at the New York City Department of Education and clerked in the Southern District of New York. Bhargava earned her law degree from Columbia Law School and graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College. She was born and raised on the south side of Chicago.

Panel II



Dr. Haley Duschinski is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Center for Law, Justice & Culture at Ohio University. She is a legal and political anthropologist with research specializations in violence, war, and power; law and society; human rights, militarization and impunity; and law and memory in Kashmir. She is a founding member of the Critical Kashmir Studies scholarly collective and co-editor of the recently published edited volume *Resisting Occupation in Kashmir* (University of Pennsylvania Press 2018). She co-edited a special issue of *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* on comparative studies of occupation as well as a forthcoming special issue of *Himalaya* on war and suffering in Kashmir. Her research has appeared in academic journals such as *Political and Legal*

Anthropology Review, Cultural Studies, Race & Class, Memory Studies, Anthropology Today, Interventions, and Anthropological Quarterly, among others. Professor Duschinski is a member of the Kashmir Scholars Consultative and Action Network (KSCAN).



Sehla Ashai is a Kashmiri American attorney and human rights activist, with a special focus on immigration, racial/religious discrimination, and women's rights. A graduate of Johns Hopkins University and University of Michigan Law School, Ms. Ashai received the Henry Bates and Clara Belfield Fellowship from University of Michigan Law School in 2005 to study the state subjects law of Kashmir and presented her findings at the Association of American Law Schools Annual Meeting Session on Law and South Asian Studies that same year. After law school, Sehla has

worked as a federal judicial law clerk, a legal aid attorney, a human rights program consultant (domestically and internationally), and the director of immigration litigation for a nonprofit focused on serving the Muslim community. Currently, she serves as of counsel for Elbially Law, where she serves clients in immigration litigation related to national security concerns and national origin in the Middle East and South Asia.



Yousra Fazili is an attorney and a special policy advisor on the Middle East and North Africa to various U.S. government agencies in Washington, DC. Under the Obama administration, she worked with the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy, where her work focused on public sector strategic planning, global nuclear security, and international negotiations. Ms. Fazili is an independent consultant to organizations including the US Institute for Peace, Stanford Design School, and the United Nations. She has worked with the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and Human Rights Watch and was a delegate to the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights. Ms. Fazili was awarded a prestigious Harvard World Religions Fellowship, where her academic

research focused on gender and Islamic law. A Fulbright Scholar, Ms. Fazili is a graduate of Harvard University, Brown University, and American University's Washington College of Law.



Arjun Singh Sethi is a human rights lawyer, community activist, author, and law professor based in Washington, DC. He works closely with Muslim, Arab, South Asian, and Sikh communities and advocates for racial justice, equity, and social change at the local and national levels. He has represented asylum seekers and national security detainees, and has served as a legal observer across the world, including military commissions at Guantanamo Bay. He holds faculty appointments at Georgetown University

Law Center and Vanderbilt University Law School, and presently co-chairs the American Bar Association's National Committee on Homeland Security, Terrorism, and Treatment of Enemy Combatants. In the wake of the 2016 presidential election, Arjun traveled the country and met with a diversity of people and documented the hate they experienced during the campaign and after inauguration. *American Hate: Survivors Speak Out* was released in August 2018 and named an NPR Best Book of the Year.



Sunandra Vashisht has over 15 years of experience as a writer, political commentator, columnist and social media influencer well known for quality interventions on political and foreign affairs. She connects with American policy makers to educate them on issues of India and the Indian diaspora. She has written for several news organizations and have been a regular columnist for Daily News and Analysis (DNA). Her area of focus has been conflict in the Kashmir valley. She founded and managed MyIndMakers, a new age media company. She routinely takes up speaking assignments about India and issues pertaining to India in events such as Houston India Conference,

World Hindu Conference, Jaipur Literature Festival and various other venues across India and USA.



John Sifton is Asia Advocacy Director at Human Rights Watch. He works on South and Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa. Sifton began working at Human Rights Watch in 2001, first as a researcher in the Asia division, focusing on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and then as the senior researcher on terrorism and counterterrorism. He also 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 he worked at a refugee advocacy organization in

Albania and Kosovo. He holds a law degree from New York University and a bachelor's degree from St. John's College, Annapolis.