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| Dr. Mehreen Afzal | ma4619@columbia.edu |

Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs

**Extensive experience and success in navigating global legal and policy initiatives within the United Nations. Academic acumen in international law and policy with a specific interest in reform agendas.** Dynamic and articulate professional with knowledge in orchestrating UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency - engagement in high level multilateral processes across the pillars and organs of the UN. A gifted negotiator and consensus builder, skilled at forging partnerships with UN interlocutors, diplomatic missions, international organizations and academia alike. An intellectual with a keen ability to think past mandates and portfolios, finding spaces for creative and innovative thinking.

Key Attributes

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| * Strategic Vision * Policy Development * Negotiation & Advocacy * Diplomatic and Political Acumen | * International Refugee Law * International Human Rights Law * Climate Policy and Public Policy * Security Studies | * Headquarters and Field experience * Motivational Team Leadership * UN languages |

Education

Grotius Research Fellow – Refugee Law Program

University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, Michigan

Visiting Scholar – International Migration Program

Columbia University – New York, New York

Doctor of Laws (PhD) – International Law/Refugee Law

European University Institute – Florence, Italy

Master in Research (MRes) – Comparative European & International Law

European University Institute – Florence, Italy

Erasmus Programme – French Law

Universite de Montesquieu Bordeaux IV – Bordeaux, France

LLB (Honours) – European Law

University of Warwick – Warwick, United Kingdom

European Baccalaureate

European School – Luxembourg

Career Experience

Columbia University – School of International and Public Affairs

Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs 2024

UNHCR – Several Locations 2007 – 2023

Senior Legal Officer (2021 – 2023) Inspector General’s Office, Bangkok

Internal Justice and policy making and implementation on integrity related matters in UNHCR including whistleblower protection, abuse of authority, sexual harassment.

Senior Policy Officer (2017 - 2020) New York Office, USA

Global policy advocacy and negotiation at UNHQ New York. UNHCR expert engaging on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and spearheading UNHCR involvement in climate initiatives across UNHQ (Climate Summit 2019, nexus between climate and international peace and security).

Special Officer (2016) Headquarters, Division of International Protection, Geneva, Switzerland

Research and drafting policy publications for UNHCR in international protection.

Head of Protection (2012 – 2014) Country Representation Kigali, Rwanda

Country wide protection lead for UNHCR Rwanda Representation Office (100k refugees and returnees) and emergency lead during influx from Democratic Republic of the Congo border in 2012-2013.

Emergency Lead (2011) – Sub Country Office Dadaab, Kenya

Emergency team lead in Dadaab Refugee Camp in UNHCR’s sub-office in Kenya during the 2011 Southern Somalia crisis and famine.

Associate Protection Officer (2010 – 2012) – Regional Office, West Africa, Dakar, Senegal

Research, drafting and training for country operations and national governments in the West African ECOWAS region on international refugee law, cessation and exemption adjudications of refugee status across West Africa.

Associate Legal Officer (2008 – 2010) – Headquarters, Legal Affairs Service, Geneva, Switzerland

In house lawyer for UNHCR on all matters related to Administration of Justice.

Consultant (2008) – Headquarters, Division of International Protection, Geneva, Switzerland

Policy drafting on relationship between forced displacement and mixed migration.

Associate Protection Officer (2007) – Country Representation, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Policy and strategy development of Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazaar Bangladesh.

Public Speaking Engagements

2017-2020

Berlin Conference on Climate and Security, Federal Foreign Office, Germany - [Panel on Innovating Institutions](https://berlin-climate-security-conference.de/system/files/document/summary_bcsc_2020_part_i.pdf)

**Intergovernmental Conference to adopt the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**, Marrakech Morocco – Delivered UNHCR statement.

**Annual International Law Symposium Fordham University**, New York - Panel presentation on the Global Compact for Migration

**Conference on International Migration, New York University**, New York - Panel presentation on the European Migration Crisis

**American Society of International Law Annual Conference,** Washington DC **-** Panel presentation on the Global Refugee Crisis

Bard College & Open Society Foundations New York - Guest Lecture on Refugee Protection and the Global Refugee Compact

Rutgers University – Guest Lecture on Refugee Protection

**UN Intensive Summer Study Programme** UN-USA New York - Guest lecture on The Refugee Crisis: Conflict, Peace and Response

Publications

Afzal, M., ‘[A Violation of His or Her Human Security. New Grounds for Recognition of Refugee Status – A Proposal for Reform](https://www.refworld.org/docid/4c2472e70.html),’ *New Issues in Refugee Research, UNHCR,* (2006)

Afzal, M., ‘[Rethinking Asylum: The Feasibility of Human Security as New Ratione Personae Protection](https://www.law.upenn.edu/journals/jil/jilp/articles/3-1_Afzal_Mehreen.pdf),’ *Journal of International Law and Policy*, Vol 3 (2006).