

THE JAGIELLONIAN LAW SOCIETY AND THE  
KOSCIUSZKO FOUNDATION *Present*



the **KF**

in cooperation with  
AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL LAW SECTION  
WOMEN'S INTEREST NETWORK  
and INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE



Kabul 

AFGHANISTAN

# OPERATION L

POLISH EFFORTS TO SAVE AFGHAN  
JUDGES AND LAWYERS

PAKISTAN

ONLINE SEMINAR

Wednesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022

12:00 pm (NYC) / 18:00 (Warsaw)

## ONLINE SEMINAR

# OPERATION L

## POLISH EFFORTS TO SAVE AFGHAN JUDGES AND LAWYERS

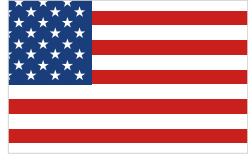
This webinar will tell the story of the daring rescue mission and evacuation of women judges from Afghanistan, conducted in August 2021 by the Polish Special Forces.

For the first time, you will hear the backstory of this daring rescue, how it happened, how the Afghans felt, and what is occurring now. It is a story about how new technologies can change the course of events and how one tweet can make a difference. Finally, it is a story of human solidarity, hope, and old-fashioned human decency.

In August 2021, the Taliban returned to power and the last US military aircrafts were leaving Kabul. As a result, after 20 years of relative safety, the legal profession came immediately under a threat. The situation was of great concern to judges, prosecutors, and lawyers in Afghanistan, especially to women judges, who have struggled to establish themselves as independent judges in an environment which was hostile to them even before the Taliban takeover. For the Taliban, however, these women were a symbol of women's independence, education, and strength. Many of these judges have jailed Taliban fighters for serious offenses involving terrorism and violence toward women during their tenure as judges. These prisoners were immediately released from prison by the incoming Taliban authorities. Even before the Taliban coup, two women judges were killed in attacks committed by "unknown perpetrators." A number of women judges were receiving death threats and threats of violence, which forced them to move from place to place to avoid capture by the Taliban. They have lost their livelihoods and their homes and were in danger of losing their lives too.

At the same time, by virtue of their positions, the women judges were not involved or known to many foreign states conducting airlift operations. That meant that no state considered itself obligated to assist them in a hasty evacuation.

The country that responded to the dire situation of the Afghan women judges was Poland, which at the time was conducting its own evacuation mission. Polish Military forces were part of the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan, and they primarily were involved in helping to evacuate



Afghans who worked with the Polish embassy in Kabul and those Afghans who worked with various non-governmental organizations, the International Monetary Fund, and NATO.

Poland has organized forty-four flights between Kabul and Warsaw, with stopovers in Uzbekistan and Georgia. They transported more than one thousand and two hundred Afghans, in addition to several Poles and people of other nationalities.

Thanks to one tweet by a brave young Afghan judge, a kind and daring Polish female lawyer who understood the danger and decided to do something about it, as well as due to the dedication of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the Polish Special Forces, the evacuation mission was carried out. As a result, a group of women judges, lawyers, and prosecutors together with their families (almost 90 persons in total) arrived safely in Poland.

These rescued Afghan judges and lawyers are currently supported by a group of Polish lawyers, Polish judges, and various NGOs. They are also supported financially by a comprehensive Polish government's program.

We are honored to feature two outstanding Afghan women judges who were rescued, a Polish pro bono attorney who initiated these efforts, two representatives from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs who arranged for the airlift, and a senior female diplomat from the Afghanistan Embassy in Poland who assisted with the rescue operation.



*Meeting of the Afghan judges and lawyers who were airlifted from the Kabul with the Polish judges and lawyers at the Warsaw Bar Association office in 2022..*

OPERATION

## JAGIELLONIAN LAW SOCIETY (JLS)



The Jagiellonian Law Society (JLS) is a voluntary legal association of a diverse group of professionals (lawyers, judges, law faculty, and law students) who are interested in, or have roots in Polish and Central/Eastern European (CEE) cultures. Membership in the JLS is open to any legal professional of any country who shares our interests and goals.

Our members are committed to fostering understanding and respect between different countries, cultures, institutions, and legal systems, to eliminating bias and enhancing tolerance in the United States, Poland, CEE, Europe and around the world. We would like to deepen the understanding of Polish and CEE cultures and history in the United States. JLS also aims to strengthen the ties between legal professionals and legal organizations in the US, Poland, and CEE.

We are nonsectarian and nonpartisan. As an organization with many multicultural, bicultural, and bilingual members, JLS strives to advance the rule of law and to protect human rights for all people. We affirm the dignity of every individual and stand against prejudice and stereotyping of any group through promoting the rule of law, open access to courts, international cooperation, and fair, independent, and equitable legal institutions.

We aim to become a go-to forum for issues of legal importance for the American, Polish, Polish American, and other CEE legal communities in the United States and Poland.

Through pro bono work, educational programs, scholarships, and various social activities, we engage our members from throughout the entire legal community in the US, Poland and in CEE. We cooperate with various legal and professional and academic organizations to further our goals. We sponsor CLE events, lectures, fundraisers and social gatherings and we offer scholarships and merit-based grants. We celebrate the depth and richness of Polish culture as well as that of other CEE countries and we support various cultural and artistic events. We provide referral services to our members and to a larger community.

# THE KOSCIUSZKO FOUNDATION

THE AMERICAN CENTER OF POLISH CULTURE

theKF

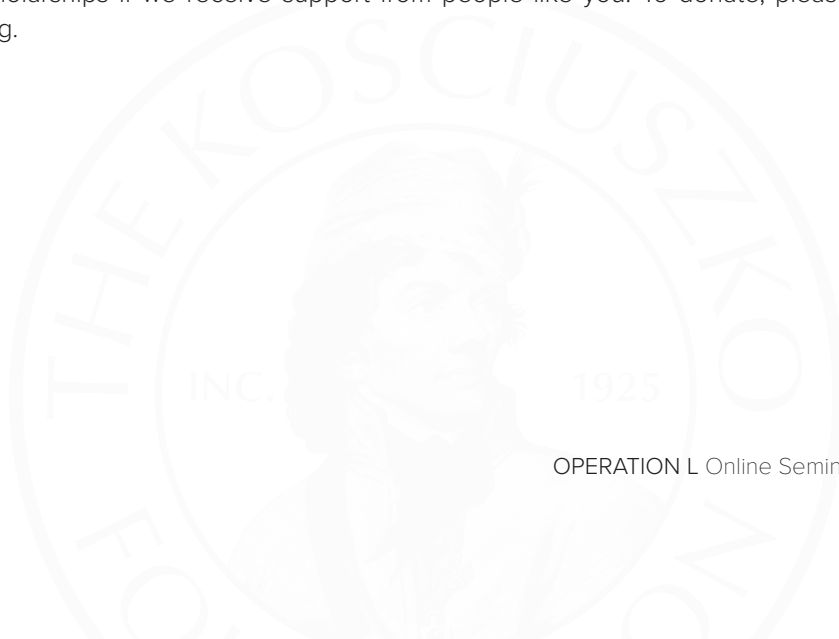
Founded in 1925, the Kosciuszko Foundation promotes closer ties between Poland and the United States through educational, scientific and cultural exchanges. It awards up to \$1 million annually in fellowships and grants to graduate students, scholars, scientists, professionals, and artists, and promotes Polish culture in America. The Foundation has awarded scholarships and provided a forum to Poles who have changed history.

In the 18th century, Tadeusz Kosciuszko said, “By nature, we are all equals – virtue, riches, and knowledge constitute the only difference.” Education is the key to success, and Kosciuszko dedicated his life to the liberation and education of the underprivileged. He also donated his last will and testament to the education of peasants and slaves. In the 20th century, another virtuous Pole, Mizwa, followed his example and established the Kosciuszko Foundation whose primary mission is education and promoting Polish culture.

As the years rolled on and the challenges facing Poland changed with the times, the Foundation’s work has evolved to meet those challenges. Mizwa started the Foundation after Poland’s rebirth, but his mission took on new meaning during the years of Nazism, Communism, and the Cold War. Today, Poland is once again free and part of NATO and the European Union. Many Kosciuszko Foundation alumni have taken part in that transformation.

These days, young Poles and Polish-Americans are uniquely poised to change the world, not just through humanities and the arts, but through the sciences, technology, and business as well. But it takes money to finance their dreams through education. With scholarships, they can become the leaders of tomorrow. For the 21st century, the Kosciuszko Foundation wants to build on the examples set by Kosciuszko and Mizwa, but we need your help to do it.

The Kosciuszko Foundation can only continue its activities supporting Polish culture and awarding scholarships if we receive support from people like you. To donate, please visit [www.thekf.org](http://www.thekf.org).





## PANEL MODERATOR



### Dr. ELIZABETH. M. ZECHENTER

**Elizabeth. M. Zechenter, Ph.D., J.D.** is a US-educated and qualified international attorney, social scientist, published author, and frequent public speaker. Currently, she is a visiting scholar at the Emory University College of Arts and Sciences.

She was born in Poland and educated in the U.S. After obtaining her J.D., she began her practice at Hogan and Harston, LLP (currently Hogan Lovells) in Washington DC.

After relocating to Philadelphia, she joined Morgan Lewis LLP until joining GSK's International Legal Operations, as the Assistant General Counsel, where she has served in a variety of legal leadership roles. She is admitted to practice in P.A. and D.C. and speaks five languages.

In addition to her legal career, Elizabeth has an M.A. in history and a Ph.D. in evolutionary anthropology and archaeology from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Her research has been focused on the economic foundations of social complexity and cultural evolution. She was the director of a large multi-year multidisciplinary research project in Peru (Proyecto PARAISO) and participated in several other research projects in Latin America and Europe. She also taught social science courses at UCLA, the University of Pennsylvania, and Rutgers University. Dr. Zechenter has taught international law and human rights law courses at the Georgetown University Law Center. She also served as an associate editor of the Law and Policy in International Business: The International Law Journal of Georgetown University Law Center and worked as a summer clerk to Judge Sloviter, Chief Judge, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

She combines her social science training with her legal education and has been involved in human rights and the rule of law research and projects. She has looked at the theoretical foundation of modern human rights laws and their applicability in a diverse world, especially in cases of culturally disadvantaged and discriminated groups such as women, minorities, and indigenous populations.

She has held several offices, among them chair of the International Human Committee of the Philadelphia Bar, chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples for the Human Rights Committee, Section of International Law and Practice of the American Bar Association (ABA). She was a member of the Working Group on Law and Anthropology for the Commission for Human Rights for the American Anthropological Association. Currently,

she is serving as co-chair of ABA International Law Section Women Interest Network (WIN), heads the WIN's Working Group on Women's Health and Reproductive Rights, and as a vice-chair for Programs for the International Human Rights Committee of the ABA's International Law Section. She is also a member of the ABA's Afghan Judicial Resettlement Task Force and the ABA's Afghanistan Response Working Group as well as the Ukraine Task Force for the New York City Bar, New York State Bar, and ABA. In addition, she has been working with ABA's Center for Human Rights Justice Defenders Program, advising on judicial and the rule of law issues. From 2019 to 2021, she was a presidential appointee to the Advisory Committee for ABA's Center for Human Rights.

On March 8, 2022, Dr. Zechenter received Lifetime Achievement Award at the Third Annual International Law Conference on the Status of Women held in the lead-up to the 66th Regular Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, and co-sponsored by the New York City Bar, American Bar Association, and New York State Bar Association. She was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for her advocacy and work on behalf of the human rights of disadvantaged populations. She is one of ten women who were recognized with that award, among them two US federal judges and several CEOs of international non-governmental organizations.





## NIGARA MIRDAD OMAR

**Mrs. Nigara Mirdad Omar** is a senior diplomate, legal counselor and the Deputy Head of Mission (DHM) of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Warsaw. She is a seasoned Afghan diplomat with long experience of serving in a number of key positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Among her experiences are:

1. Deputy Director-General of Political department and Head of China Section, 2017-2020.
2. Third secretary of the Afghanistan Embassy and Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Head of UNHCR, IOM, and ITO between 2015-2016.
3. Head of Political and Economic section Embassy of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Paris, 2013-2015.
4. Desk Officer on Iran in the Second Political Department in Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010-2013.
5. Member of the Second Political Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008-2010.

Mrs. Omar holds Bachelor and master's degrees in International Law from Tajik National State University, 2008. She also participated in the one-year program at the Institute of Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Afghanistan, earning a high degree in 2010.

She speaks English and Russian alongside several national languages. She has played a significant role in national and international events and has participated in various bilateral and multilateral negotiations at the state level.

She has played a crucial role in rescuing 150 Afghans stranded in Dubai airport in 2020 during the COVID19 quarantine. By arranging for the first chartered flight to Dubai from Kabul, she was able to help more than 50 children and women.

Mrs. Omar also helped by cooperating with Poland and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the evacuation of nearly 1200 Afghans escaping the Taliban takeover in August 2021, after the collapse of Kabul.

## JUDGE TAYEBA PARSA

I am **Tayeba Parsa**. I was a judge in the Commercial Division of the Appellate Court of Kabul province. Before Kabul fell, I was also the communications officer for the Afghan Women's Judges' Association (AWJA).

I have a master's degree in criminal law and criminology. After I graduated from the Islamic Sharia Law School of Kabul university in 2008, I was already interested in law. I wanted to become a lawyer to protect people's rights against various injustices and rampant violations of their rights in the corrupt legal system. But I did not think I could be a judge without more education as I wanted to be fair and act in accordance with laws. I participated in a practical advocacy skills training program conducted by the Legal Aid Organization of Afghanistan for six months. After that, I took part in Young Lawyers in Training Program organized by the Global Rights organization. I got the highest score on the entrance examination test for the judiciary. So I decided to use that opportunity to participate in two-year judiciary training and become more familiar with the laws and regulations of Afghanistan. After graduation, I became an assistant to the judge in the Civil and Public Rights Division of the Supreme Court for one year. Making reports on legal cases and procedures, I had the chance to learn the legal system used by the primary and appellate courts and the Supreme Court of Afghanistan. I was given an opportunity to choose one of the primary courts I was interested in. I decided to join the Commercial Court to gain more experience. I did not mean to remain a judge when I started working as a judge. I observed numerous violations of law due to rampant corruption, and now I have the ability and authority to fight that corruption and protect people and implement the rule of law. Being an effective judge became my ambition. However, I was not satisfied with my legal knowledge and wanted to continue my studies. In addition, Afghanistan's judiciary is fully professionalized as yet, and judges without experience do get appointed. For example, one can be appointed as a judge in a criminal court after working in civil courts. In the beginning, I was afraid of working in Criminal Courts. Without enough knowledge, one may put innocent people in jail, so I decided to obtain a master's degree in criminal law and criminology.

I worked as a judge for ten years in different courts, including the Commercial Division of Appellate Court of Kabul Province, Civil Division of the Primary Court of Kabul Province, Public Rights Division of Primary Court of Kabul Province, Primary Commercial Court of Kabul Province and Civil and Public Rights Division of the Supreme Court of Afghanistan.

When the Taliban took over Kabul, Polish authorities helped me to be evacuated to Poland. However, I do not want to abandon my career. I am trying to use this difficult time of being in exile to build up my judicial capacity and to study modern law. With knowledge and hard work, I believe that female judges and lawyers of Afghanistan will not give up. We will continue learning and fighting for justice, democracy, and the rule of law for the people of Afghanistan.



OPERATIONAL



## JUDGE ANISA RASOOLI

Judge **Anisa Rasooli** is a Senior Member of the Afghan Judiciary and the first woman to be considered as a candidate to the Afghan Supreme Court, the country's highest judicial court.

She served as the Head of the Appellate Court in the Division of Serious Crimes of Corruption. Most recently, she was appointed as a judicial advisor to the Afghan Supreme Court. She also served as the Head of the Afghan Women's Judges Association.

A graduate of Kabul University, she holds degrees in Law and Political Science, a master's in criminal justice, and she completed special judicial courses mandated by the Supreme Court.

She began her career in the Criminal Division of the Afghan High Court and then became a judge in the Kabul Public Security Court. Like all women judges, she was removed from the Judiciary by the Taliban in 1996. During this period, she founded a school for girls. After reinstatement, she became the Head of the Kabul Juvenile Court and later was named the Head of the Juvenile Appellate Court. This was followed by her appointment as the Head of the Appellate Court's division for Serious Crimes of Corruption. Currently, she serves as a judicial advisor to the Afghan Supreme Court for nonviolent offenders.

In addition to her judicial duties, she lectures and teaches Afghan Constitutional Law, women's rights under Islam, juvenile justice, international human rights, family law, inheritance law, and fair punishment. She has served as Head and deputy head of the Afghan Women Judges Association and was instrumental in producing the First Afghan Women Judges Conference in Kabul in 2007.

Judge Rasooli serves on a commission drafting a new criminal code and continues to participate in criminal reform work.

Of special note, Judge Rasooli was the first woman to be appointed by the president of the country to serve on the Afghan Supreme Court, the country's highest judicial position, only to have her candidacy narrowly defeated by the vote in parliament.

## ANNA KRUSZEWSKA



**Anna Kruszevska** is a legal counsel, member of Warsaw Bar Association, and a partner in a boutique law firm Hasik Rheims & Partners. She is an expert on intellectual property law, with particular emphasis on copyright, media law, and protection of personal rights, as well as a new technology law and IT. She advises film and television producers, publishers and producers of computer games, and organizers of concerts and other cultural and sports events. Attorney in high-profile lawsuits filed by public figures against media and authors of book publications in Poland. Anna represented among others the family of Wladyslaw Szpilman (famous pianist) and the daughter of former Polish President A. Kwasniewski in cases concerning protection of their privacy and reputation. She constantly advises one of the largest producers of computer games in the world CD Projekt, the publisher of the game “Witcher” and “Cyberpunk”.

Anna is a lecturer at the H. Grotius Center for Intellectual Property Rights and at the Polish Chamber of Patent Attorneys. Co-author of, among others, Commentary to Industrial Property Law (C.H. Beck, 2016), and publication “*Law in Cultural Institutions*” (C.H. Beck 2019).

She is a recipient of the RISING STAR title awarded to rising stars of the Polish legal profession by Lexis Nexis publishing house, recommended in foreign rankings (e.g., Legal 500). She graduated from the Law Department of the University of Warsaw (summa cum laude), got law degree at Cardiff University in the United Kingdom, and completed the courses at the Center for English and European Law organized in cooperation with the University of Cambridge, and at the Center for American Law organized with the Faculty of State Law at the University of Florida. Anna also completed a postgraduate courses “*Business AI: Technology, Law, Application of Artificial Intelligence*” and “*Modern Technology Law*”.

Anna is the initiator of the evacuation of Afghan judges carried out in August 2021 by the Polish government and the guardian of this group on Polish territory, a consultant to the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ). Since then, she has been involved in advocacy for refugees in Poland, especially from Afghanistan. She runs an informal group of lawyers called “Legal Aid” which brings together more than 100 lawyers from Warsaw renown law firms, whose current goal is pro bono help to refugees from Ukraine. As part of the group’s activities, she is supporting children from Ukrainian orphanages. She also provides legal assistance to third-country nationals fleeing from Ukraine and is a co-organizer of the action connecting Polish local governments from the eastern border with local authorities and volunteers from other countries of the European Union. Her law firm has been nominated for a prestigious award “Pro bono: Outstanding Firm” in Chambers Europe 2022.



## SZYMON ANTONI KURZAWA

**Szymon Antoni Kurzawa**, is a Consular Crisis Coordinator at Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland. He is a career diplomat and an alumnus of the Imperial College London and SOAS University of London. Formerly worked in a corporate sector as a business consultant and supply chain analyst. Since 2017, works at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, where he previously served as a Vice-Consul at the Polish Embassy in Beijing (2018-2020). Since 2020, he is Consular Crisis Coordinator at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During his mission to China, Szymon Kurzawa coordinated the evacuation of 60 Polish citizens from Wuhan together with the EU, British and Brazilian partners.

After joining the Crisis Management Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he coordinated several medical evacuations from remote destinations, as well as evacuation during the 2020 Dover crisis and the large scale evacuation from Afghanistan in August 2021. He also has dealt with several maritime abductions, various acts of terrorism, and criminal kidnappings of Polish citizens abroad. He is currently responsible for supervising the Crisis Management Team at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## KAROLINA IWONA SMAGA

**Karolina Iwona Smaga** is a Counsellor in Consular Department and member of Crisis Management Team at Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland

She is a career diplomat and an alumna of the University of Warsaw and the Paris 2 Pantheon Assas Law School in Paris. She formerly worked at White & Case LPP Warsaw, as an associate. Since 2009, she is at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, where she served as a Vice-Consul at the Polish Embassy in Athens (2013 – 2016), as a Vice-Consul at the Polish Embassy in Paris (2016 – 2018) and as a Consul, Head of the Consular Section at the Polish Embassy in Paris (2018 – 2020).

In the face of current major challenges i.e. the global COVID-19 pandemic most of all, she was a member of Crisis Management Team which coordinated #Lotdodomu repatriation program which was one of the most complex air operations in over 100-year history of Polish civil aviation. She coordinated a dedicated crisis phone line for the Polish citizens abroad, and also provided assistance in coordinating the consular crisis in Dover following the closure of the border with the United Kingdom by the French authorities.



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GRAPHIC DESIGN  
Margaret Kozłowska

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