

KWA GEOK CHOO DISTINGUISHED VISITORS LECTURE

HUMAN RIGHTS, THE FAMILY JUSTICE SYSTEM AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

Professor Shazia Choudhry
Faculty of Law, University of Oxford

Chairperson: Professor Lynette J. Chua, Vice Dean (Research), NUS Law

TUESDAY 20 AUGUST 2024
5.30 PM - 7.00 PM

NUS LAW (BUKIT TIMAH CAMPUS), WEE CHONG JIN MOOT COURT

Domestic abuse is one of the most serious and pervasive forms of violence against women and girls and constitutes a violation of their human rights. Given the prevalence of domestic abuse in relationships, and that separation from a perpetrator can be the most dangerous period for the victim, a focus of increasing concern has been the dangers posed by post-separation contact to both adult and child victims (either as direct victims or as witnesses and including sexual abuse). The phenomena of domestic abuse perpetrators using family law proceedings as a tool to continue the abuse and coercion has been demonstrated by a substantial body of research. This not only facilitates the secondary traumatising of victims of abuse but also implicates state institutions in its perpetuation, most particularly when access to children is mandated and custody of children is awarded to perpetrators, despite evidence of a history of domestic and/or sexual abuse. In recent years, it is apparent that the concept of 'parental alienation' in its many forms and iterations, has played a significant role in providing justifications for such outcomes which is causing widespread alarm and distress.

The response of family justice systems towards victims of domestic abuse across the world epitomises a lack of understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse and the utilisation of family law proceedings by perpetrators to continue abuse, most particularly with reference to so called 'parental alienation.' Most stark, however, is the lack of reference to human rights law. The private arena of family law has remained largely untroubled by advances in understanding concerning domestic abuse and the applicability of due diligence standards and positive obligations in this regard. This lecture will provide a detailed overview of these issues and an analysis of the relevance of international human rights law to this area.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Shazia Choudhry is a Professor of Law at the Faculty of Law and Tutorial Fellow in Law at Wadham College, University of Oxford. Her research on gender, human rights and violence against women is internationally recognised and examines various dimensions of these areas from an interdisciplinary and feminist perspective. Her research employs doctrinal, theoretical, and empirical methods and her scholarship sits at the interface of criminal law, family law and human rights.

The impact of Professor Choudhry's internationally groundbreaking research within the field of violence against women and human rights has been recognized by her advisory work and appointments to a range of international advisory boards and panels. She has been appointed as Specialist Legal Adviser to various Parliamentary Committees including in the United Kingdom, the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Violence against Women (2014-15), the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill (2019) and the Women and Equalities Committee (2023).

She has held appointments as an expert evaluator for the European Commission, as an expert consultant for the Council of Europe (including participating in the GREVIO monitoring mission to Serbia), as an expert consultant for the UNFPA and as an expert consultant for the UN. In the United Kingdom, her recent research on the issue of child contact and victims of domestic abuse has been drawn upon by members of the judiciary, members of Parliament, the Victims Commissioner and the Home Affairs (Parliamentary) Committee in its report on the proposed Domestic Abuse Bill 2018. She has also been commissioned to provide specific research for the Ministry of Justice in the UK and the Secretariat of the Monitoring Mechanism to the Istanbul Convention (GREVIO) and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences. In addition, she regularly provides expert advice to national bodies on gender equality, violence against women and girls, the impact of violence in family law proceedings and access to justice for women. In 2024, Professor Choudhry was put forward by the UK Government as their first ever nomination for election to the UN CEDAW Committee – the committee that monitors the implementation of the Convention against the Elimination against Discrimination against Women.

PROGRAMME

5.00PM	Registration
5.30PM	Lecture by Professor Shazia Choudhry
6.30PM	Q&A Session
7.00PM	Dinner Reception

REGISTRATION

There is no registration fee for this lecture but seats are limited. Visit <https://bit.ly/45vLOFc> or scan the QR Code to register by Tuesday, 13 August 2024, 5.00 PM.



CONTACT PERSON

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CPD POINTS



Public CPD Point: 1
Practice Area: Family
Training Level: Foundation

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