

## Zohra Ahmed

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### CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

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#### **Boston University School of Law**

1/2024- present

*Associate Professor*

Courses: Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure (Investigations), Law and Capitalism

#### **Community Justice Exchange/National Bail Fund Network**

4/2020- present

*Strategic Advisor*

- Provide technical, strategic and organizational support for organizers facing criminal charges and their defense attorneys.
- Lead research team of over 20 attorneys and law school clinic students that develops memos, practice guides and resources for defense attorneys defending against politically motivated criminal charges.
- Provide technical expertise and strategic advice on local and national campaigns to end incarceration, supervision, and surveillance.

### WRITING

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#### Scholarship

[\*Criminal Court's Disability\*](#), 125 COLUMBIA LAW REVIEW 1173 (2025).

[\*Taking Revolution Seriously\*](#), 123 MICHIGAN LAW REVIEW 1209 (2025).

- Reviewing TIP OF THE SPEAR: BLACK RADICALISM, PRISON REPRESSION, AND THE LONG ATTICA REVOLT by Orisanmi Burton.

[\*The Price of Consent\*](#), 49 YALE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW 208 (2024).

- Scholarly Paper Award 2024, Section on Law and South Asian Studies, AALS
- Featured in [Clauses and Controversies](#).

[\*The Right to Counsel in a Neoliberal Age\*](#), 69 UCLA LAW REVIEW 442 (2022).

[\*Bargaining for Abolition\*](#), 90 FORDHAM LAW REVIEW 1953 (2022) (invited essay).

[\*The Sanctuary of Prosecutorial Nullification\*](#), 83 ALBANY LAW REVIEW 239 (2020).

[\*Pressing Charges\*](#), 26 NEW LABOR FORUM 109 (2017).

- Reviewing CROOK COUNTY: RACISM AND INJUSTICE IN AMERICA'S LARGEST CRIMINAL COURT by Nicole Van Cleve.

#### Select Essays, Blog Posts and Op-eds

[\*The Right-Wing Campaign to Suppress Opposition Consolidates Its Gains\*](#), The Nation (May 1, 2025).

[\*The Role of Coercion in the Neoliberal Economy\*](#), Law & Political Economy Blog (Oct. 21, 2024).

[\*The Demand for Transparency as a Non-Reformist Reform\*](#), Law & Political Economy Blog (Jan. 15, 2024).

[\*How Georgia Indicted a Movement\*](#), THE NATION (Sept. 12, 2023) (with Elizabeth Taxel).

- Reprinted in NO COP CITY, NO COP WORLD (Franklin et al. eds., 2025).

[\*The Right to Counsel in a Neoliberal Age\*](#), Law & Political Economy Blog (Oct. 20, 2022).

[\*Towards a Law and Political Economy of the Global War on Terror\*](#), Law & Political Economy Blog (Nov. 24, 2021).

#### Works in Progress

*The Conspiracy of the Carceral State* (with Jocelyn Simonson)

*Conspiracies and Solidarities*

*Compulsion in the Sovereign Lending Regime*

#### EDUCATION

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**Fordham University School of Law**, J.D., *cum laude*, 2013

Ruth Whitehead Whaley Scholar (top 25%)

Dean's List (2011-2013)

Crowley Scholar

Stein Scholar for the Public Interest

Moot Court Associate Editor

New York Women's Bar Association Foundation Fellow

**University of Cambridge**, MPhil in Social Anthropology, high pass, 2010

**University of Pennsylvania**, B.A., *cum laude*, 2008

Major in Anthropology (Distinction) and minor in Economics

Penn Institute for Urban Research Grant

Civic House Public Interest Award

Ruth Marcus Kanter College Alumni Society Undergraduate Research Grant

#### PRIOR EXPERIENCE

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**University of Georgia School of Law**

6/2021-12/2023

*Assistant Professor*

- Courses: Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure (Investigations), Crime and Punishment (Seminar)
- Award: Sarah H. Moss Fellowship (2022-2023)

**Cornell Law School**

*Clinical Teaching Fellow*, Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide 6/2018- 5/2021

- Co-taught and co-supervised students in the International Human Rights Clinic.
- Represented capital defendants in the United States and Tanzania. Oversaw United Nations advocacy on behalf of an organization in the Israeli Occupied Syrian Golan.
- Award: Anne Lukingbeal Award for Service to Women Students (2020)

**Court Watch NYC** 12/2017- 7/2020

*Co-founder & Collective member*

- Designed, launched, and managed community court watching program in New York City.
- Created and led training for volunteers.
- Mobilized watchers in public campaigns to hold elected prosecutors accountable to their promises and community demands.

**Criminal Defense Practice, Legal Aid Society**, New York, NY 2/2014-5/2018

*Staff Attorney*

- Represented indigent clients in misdemeanor and felony cases, including homicides, from arraignment to trial or plea.
- Developed trial and mitigation strategy, engaged in motion practice, consulted experts, conducted investigations, performed legal research and negotiated pleas.
- Lead counsel in five trials.
- Authored amicus briefs and developed grant proposal to study prosecutorial discretion.

**American Civil Liberties Union**, New York, NY Summer 2012

*Intern*

- Researched Article III standing for Supreme Court brief filed in *Clapper v. Amnesty International* and supervisory and municipal liability for NYPD surveillance of Muslim community.

**Center for Constitutional Rights**, New York, NY Summer 2011

*Ella Baker Fellow*

- Researched the legality of the CIA's drone program in Pakistan.

**AGHS Legal Aid Cell**, Lahore, Pakistan 11/2008- 6/2009

*Intern*

- Documented persecution of religious minorities for the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Asma Jahangir.
- Conducted intake for female inmates in prisons.

## SELECT PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS, LECTURES & PANELS

“Compulsion in the Sovereign Lending Regime”

- Law and Political Economy Workshop, Yale Law School (October 2025)
- Society of International Economic Law 2025 Taipei Global Conference (June 2025)
- Economic Sanctions and the Law: Goals, Enforcement, and Procedural and Substantive Limits, Fordham Law School (February 2025)
- American Society of International Law International Economic Law Interest Group's Biennial Conference (May 2025)

- Dollar Hegemony, State Sovereignty and International Order, University of New South Wales, Australia (December 2024)

“Conspiracies and Solidarities,” Critical Race Studies Free Speech Law for a Multiracial Democracy Workshop Series, UCLA Law School (March 2025).

Panelist, Forging Alternative Constitutional Horizons, Book Symposium on Aziz Rana’s *The Constitutional Bind*, Program on Law and Political Economy, Harvard Law School (Oct. 2024).

Chair, Critical Perspectives on Municipal Finance and the Carceral City, Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Denver (June 2024).

Panelist, Geographies of Contestation and Competition, TWAAIL, Geopolitical Competition and the Rise of Non-Western Imperialisms, Yale Law School (April 2024).

Keynote, Cardozo Journal of Equal Rights and Social Justice 2024 Symposium: Stop Cop City and the Criminalization of Social Movements (Feb. 2024).

"Criminal Court’s Disability” (previously titled Competency to Stand Trial: A Cautionary Tale)

- 2024 CrimFest, Cardozo Law School (June 2024)
- 2024 Decarceration Law Professors Work in Progress Workshop (June 2024)
- Race, Care and Capitalism, Law and Political Economy Project, Yale Law School (May 2024)
- Critical Race Theory Seminar, Boston University School of Law (March 2024)
- Faculty workshop, University of Mississippi School of Law (November 2023)
- 2023 Decarceration Law Professors Work in Progress Workshop (July 2023)
- Faculty workshop, University of Washington School of Law (March 2023)
- Faculty workshop, Seattle University School of Law (February 2023)

“On the Relationship Between Debt and Militarism,” Political Economy and the International Laws of Violence, Free University of Berlin (Sept. 2023).

Panelist, Race, Empire and International Law, Law & Political Economy Conference, Harvard Law School (April 2023).

“The Price of Consent,” (previously entitled “Self-Determination Inside Out”)

- Center for Global Law and Justice, Northeastern University School of Law (October 2025)
- Law and Political Economy Workshop, Harvard Law School (March 2025)
- Public Law Workshop, Stanford Law School (October 2023)
- YSI Conference on Debt Sustainability, Boston University Global Development Policy Center (April 2023)
- Faculty workshop, Cardozo Law School (November 2022)
- Law and Political Economy Workshop Series, Yale Law School (November 2022)
- Law of Global Economic Statecraft Symposium, University of Georgia (October 2022)
- Critical Law & Security Studies, UCLA Law (March 2022)
- Junior International Law Scholars Association, University of Miami (January 2022)

- Global Scholars Academy, Institute for Global Law and Policy, Harvard Law School (August 2021) (accepted after application)

“Criminalization as Colonization,” Crimfest, Cardozo Law School (July 2022).

“Race and Criminal Court,” guest lectures to classes at Fordham Law School (Fall 2021).

“Bargaining for Abolition,” Criminal Justice Ethics Schmooze, New York Law School (June 2022); Subversive Lawyering Colloquium, Fordham Law School (Oct. 2021).

Panelist, Connecting the Threads that Bind: Contextualizing Legalized Violence Against Asian Americans, UC Hastings College of the Law (September 2021).

Panelist, How Can WE Achieve Racial Justice?, Cornell University Reunion 20201 (June 2021).

“The Right to Counsel in a Neoliberal Age,”

- Faculty workshop, Wake Forest School of Law (March 2022)
- Clinical Law Review Workshop (September 2019)
- Faculty workshop, Cornell Law School (July 2019)

“The Sanctuary of Prosecutorial Nullification,” faculty workshop, Seton Hall Law School (Feb. 2020).

“How Can You be a Feminist and Represent a Rapist?,” guest lecture, Cornell Law School (Feb. 2020).

“Storytelling in Individual Cases,” Regional Convening on the Death Penalty in South Asia and the Middle East, Kathmandu, Nepal (Oct. 2019).

Panelist, Is ‘Progressive Prosecution’ an Oxymoron?, Cornell Law School (October 2019).

“Abolishing the War on Terror,” presentation at Prison Abolition, Human Rights, and Penal Reform, University of Texas at Austin (September 2019).

“Interviewing a Client and Cross Examination,” presentation at Makwanyane Institute, Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, Franschhoek, South Africa (July 2019).

Panelist, Moving Beyond the War on Drugs: Mass Incarceration Today, Cornell Law School (March 2019).

“U.S. Deployment of the Consent Exception as a Justification for Drone Strikes in Pakistan,” presentation at IntLawGrrls! 10th Birthday Conference, Dean Rusk International Law Center, University of Georgia School of Law (March 2017).

“Coming Back to Anthropology through the Law,” invited address to the Department of Anthropology Graduation Ceremony, University of Pennsylvania (May 2013).

**Languages:** French (native), Urdu (proficient), Mandarin (conversational)