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PROFILE

Human rights and immigration lawyer with more than 20 years of experience in legal practice and international development. Represents clients in U.S. immigration matters, with a focus on asylum and humanitarian protection. International work has focused on gender-based violence, torture prevention and response, conflict-related sexual violence, refugee protection, transitional justice, and rule of law, primarily in partnership with civil society organizations. Has particular expertise in ethical and survivor-centered approaches to gathering, documenting, and using information about human rights violations. Experience includes legal and policy work, program design and management, training, and advising civil society organizations, international organizations, and other partners.

EXPERIENCE

Employment

Associate Attorney | **Scott Pollock and Associates** | May – August 2025; May 2026 – present

- Represent non-citizens before the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Executive Office for Immigration Review, and U.S. Department of State in matters involving asylum and humanitarian protection, removal defense, family-based immigration, consular processing, waivers, nonimmigrant and employment-based visas, and naturalization, including cases involving survivors of violence.

Director of Nonprofit Legal Resource Project | **Chicago Bar Foundation** | September 2025 – April 2026

- Worked with the Chicago Bar Foundation to support nonprofit organizations responding to changes in federal contracting requirements, DEI policies, and other federal directives. Drafted practical guidance for nonprofits responding to federal executive orders on DEI.

Country Director | **Heartland Alliance International** | February 2024 – February 2025

- Led team across multiple sites throughout Iraq to implement human rights programming to respond to human trafficking, juvenile justice, reparations, and violence against women and girls.
- Oversaw program in Northeast Syria to respond to the needs of juveniles detained by local authorities.
- Lead on program design for new business development opportunities.
- Resolved outstanding human resource benefits and budgetary issues for HAI Iraqi staff based on the Iraqi Labor Law under federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

Chief of Party, **Management Systems International**, | Iraq | March 2019 – May 2021

- Led and concluded a \$6.2 million USAID funded program to respond to gender-based violence in minority communities targeted by ISIS that included designing and testing five pilot programs that will be evaluated for replication and scaling up, as well as a Women, Peace & Security initiative to improve access to public space for women and girls.

Governance & Gender Advisor, **Aktis Strategy Ltd.**, | Iraq | Jul. 2018- Jan. 2019

- Advised on governance-related issues in the Iraqi governorates of Basra, Ninewah, and Anbar, including compensation committee's public engagement and strengthening of the government's response to the needs of women.

Practitioner-in-Residence, **American University**, Washington College of Law | Washington, DC | Jun. 2016 - Jun. 2018

- Taught and mentored law students in the International Human Rights Law Clinic through an intensive, experiential program focused on developing practical lawyering skills. Supervised student work on cases involving asylum, refugee protection, humanitarian parole, and complaints to human rights treaty bodies.
- Taught seminar course on international human rights, gender, and cultural difference.

Women's Protection & Empowerment Coordinator, **International Rescue Committee** | Iraq | Jun. 2014-Mar. 2015

- Led IRC's gender program in Iraq and Northeastern Syria to respond to the needs of vulnerable and displaced women and girls, including survivors of genocidal attacks, with a range of services through women's listening centers.
- Tracked country & regional trends including security situation, which fed into strategic direction for the program.
- Participated in relevant UN working groups on gender-based violence and protection; worked closely with IRC partners.

Deputy Country Director, **Mercy Corps** | Iraq | Jan. 2013 - May 2014

- Designed and implemented Iraq programs on negotiation skills, conflict resolution, education access and entrepreneurial opportunities for displaced youth.
- Oversaw daily programmatic and administrative functions, proposal development, program implementation and grant administration, procurement, finance, and supervised expatriate and national staff.
- Conducted evaluation to determine feasibility for cross-border programming from northern Iraq into Syria and launched humanitarian response program for displaced persons.

Middle East Regional Director, **Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights** | Iraq | Apr. 2010- Mar. 2011

- Expanded Iraq human rights programming to Lebanon and Jordan to support protection needs of refugee survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking.
- Conducted a risk analysis and coordinated the evacuation of persecuted individuals from Iraq to neighboring countries who were targeted because of their sexual orientation.
- Supervised international staff to run and coordinate programs in both countries.

Iraq Country Director, **Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights** | Iraq | Feb. 2007- Apr. 2010

- Managed service-based human rights programming for mental health for torture survivors, and legal representation and social support services for survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking.
- Trained lawyers & social workers on legal advocacy, client-centered services, and applicable international standards and norms when working with survivors; provided ongoing technical guidance on complex cases.
- Managed proposal and report writing, assessments and trend analysis, and ensuring program targets were achieved.
- Represented Heartland Alliance to donors, Iraqi government officials, and civil society organizations.
- Secured humanitarian parole for women facing gender-based persecution who were trapped in shelters due to threats of honor killing.

Director of Legal and Social Services, **Tahirih Justice Center** | Falls Church, Virginia | May. 2011-Nov. 2012

- Led a team of attorneys and social services staff to provide holistic and client-centered legal and social services to immigrant survivors of gender-based violence.
- Collaborated with policy and legal staff to respond to the needs of women and girls facing forced marriage in the US in immigrant communities and monitored case placement.
- Led annual strategic planning for the legal department.

National Immigrant Justice Center, **A Program of Heartland Alliance** | Chicago, Illinois

Supervising Attorney | Jun. 2006 – Feb. 2007

Staff Attorney | Nov. 2002-May 2006

- Launched statewide federally funded program to assist immigrant survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault to legalize their immigration status.
- Represented several hundred survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault to legalize their status under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and U visa interim relief.
- Trained and provided technical assistance to pro bono attorneys, volunteers, and interns on VAWA and U visa cases.
- Developed materials for lawyers and other service providers working with domestic violence and sexual assault survivors.

Taboo LLC consulting

Owner | Human Rights Lawyer, Taboo LLC

Human rights and justice consulting | October 2021–Present

Independent consulting practice focused on human rights, rule of law, reparations, gender-based violence, conflict-related sexual violence, refugee protection, and ethical engagement with survivors.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) | October 2021–Present

- Support implementation of Iraq's Yazidi Survivors Law through training and technical assistance for NGOs, survivor networks, and the General Directorate for Survivors' Affairs, and development of practical resources on reparations procedures and eligibility.
- Conducted research, funded by the UN Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, on the requirement that survivors seeking reparations under the Yazidi Survivors Law participate in criminal investigations.

International Institute for Criminal Investigations (IICI) | October–November 2021; July 2025–March 2026

- Facilitated consultations in the Middle East that informed development of the Murad Code, a global code of conduct for gathering and using information from survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.
- Researched and drafted a briefing note examining factors that contribute to harmful practices in the collection and use of information related to systemic and conflict-related sexual violence.

Yazda Organization | February–August 2025

- Developed and delivered a training of trainers, in consultation with Yazidi survivors of ISIS, on survivors' rights when engaging with media, NGOs, investigators, and others who gather and share accounts of conflict-related sexual violence.

SEED Foundation | January 2024–August 2025

- Co-developed *Appeals under the Yazidi Survivors Law: Guidance for Legal Practitioners* and trained NGOs on its use.

Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights | January–June 2024

- Developed the *Ethical Engagement with Survivors* toolkit for organizations working with survivors of ISIS-related conflict-related sexual violence and designed and facilitated a training of trainers for members of the Coalition for Just Reparations.

Local organization (confidential) | October 2021–February 2024

- Conducted UNHCR resettlement interviews with Yazidi survivors of ISIS captivity, contributing to the resettlement of survivors and their children to third countries.
- Developed protocols for identifying, preparing, and referring people facing gender-based violence and LGBTQ+ persecution in Iraq for Priority 1 refugee referrals to the United States.
- Developed guidance for lawyers handling appeals under the Yazidi Survivors Law.

Independent consultancies

Winston & Strawn | US | Aug. 2017 – present as needed

- Provided expert written evaluations and testimony in immigration court for Iraqi nationals facing removal from the United State to Iraq and seeking relief under the Convention Against Torture.

Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights | US/ Iraq Program | Apr. – May. 2012

- Assisted Iraq team in preparing for a Counter-Trafficking Conference in Erbil, Kurdistan Region (developed agenda, speakers list, talking points for facilitators and welcome address).
- Reviewed and commented on Iraq Counter-Trafficking Law (passed April 2012).

Reed Smith LLP, | Jordan & Iraq | Mar. 2015- Feb. 2017

- Assisted counsel in establishing Middle East program to improve protection and resettlement for extremely vulnerable refugees in Jordan and Iraq.

Heartland Alliance International (HAI) | Iraq | Apr. 2015- Jun. 2015

- Conducted comprehensive end-of-program evaluation of HAI's State Department-funded anti-torture program.

Access to Justice Program, **Tetra Tech DPK** | Iraq and US | Mar.-Apr. 2012

- Designed and conducted five-day training of trainers for lawyers implementing USAID legal services program for vulnerable populations in Iraq. Developed "Best Practices Manual" and program materials for lawyers, and a training guide and power point presentation for legal trainers.

EDUCATION & BAR ADMISSION

International Institute for Criminal Investigations, March 2023
“Investigative Interviewing Skills” Course, The Hague

Bar Admission | 2002

Licensed to practice law in the State of Illinois since November 2002

JD | Chicago-Kent College of Law | Illinois | 2002

MA, Applied Sociology (Concentration: Gender) | Loyola University Chicago | Illinois | 2001

BA, International Relations (Concentration: Middle Eastern Politics) | University of Cincinnati | 1992

AWARDS

- 2004 recipient of Kimball R. & Karen Gatsis Anderson Public Interest Fellowship | Chicago Bar Foundation | recognizing contribution to public interest law, academic excellence in law school, and outstanding character and integrity.
- 2005 recipient of Honorable Abraham Lincoln Marovitz Public Interest Award | Chicago-Kent College of Law | in recognition of public interest leadership.
- Finalist, Southern Illinois University Writing Competition, *A Modest Proposal to Amend Patent Code Section 287(c)*.

PUBLICATIONS

Scholarly Articles / Publications

- *Discussion Document: Briefing Note on Drivers of Harmful Practices in the Gathering and Use of Information about SCRSV*, International Institute for Criminal Investigations (March 2026).
- *Mandatory Requirement to Initiate a Criminal Investigation Within the Application Process for the Yazidi Survivors Law: Implications for a Survivor-Centered Approach*, International Organization for Migration (IOM) funded by the the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) (publication forthcoming).
- *Trapped Between Borders: A Proposal to Apply International Legal Protection to Persecuted Women and Girls Who are Unable to Flee*, UC Davis Journal of International Law & Policy (November 2020).
- *Genocide, Rape and Careless Disregard: Media and the Problematic Portrayals of Yazidi Survivors of Iraq Captivity*, Feminist Media Studies (April 2019).
- *Voices of Yazidi Women: Perceptions of the Media Reporting of IS Sexual Violence in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq*, Women's Studies International Forum (February 2018).
- *Institutionalized Violence Against Women & Girls: Laws and Practices in Iraq*, Heartland Alliance (February 2011).
- *Structural Violence Against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan*, Kurdistan Human Rights Project, 15 Legal Review 87 (June 2009).
- *Protecting Noncitizen Crime Victims Under the New U Visa Interim Regulations*, IMMIGRATION BRIEFING, January 2008.
- *Human Trafficking in Iraq: Patterns and Practices in Forced Labor and Sexual Exploitation*, Heartland Alliance (June 2007).
- *The U Nonimmigrant Visa: A Practitioner's Guide*, IMMIGRATION BRIEFING, July 2006.
- *A Modest Proposal to Amend Patent Code Section 287(c) to Allow Healthcare Workers to Examine Their Patients' DNA*, 26 S. ILL. U. L.J. 471 (2002).
- *The Price Is Too High: Requiring ERISA-Regulated Managed Care Organizations to Disclose Financial Incentives Used to Limit Health Care*, 6 MICH. ST. J. MED. & L., 1 (2001).

Other Articles

- *Legal representation is vital for delivering reparations to those kidnapped by ISIS*, London School of Economics, August 4, 2025.
- *In Iraq, Minority Survivors of ISIS Genocide Cautiously Anticipate Reparations*, Women's Media Center Women Under Siege (August 26, 2022).
- *Sabaya Film Disregards Ethical Standards and Puts Survivors at Risk*, Re-Present Media, October 6, 2021.
- *New Proposed Asylum Regulations Would Endanger Women's Lives*, Lawfare, July 7, 2020.
- *Shrinking Safe Spaces for Individuals Fleeing Gender-Based Persecution*, *The Refuge*, International Refugee Law Committee, Section of International Law, American Bar Association (April 2017)

- *The Hypocrisy of Trump's Refugee Order*, The Daily Beast, January 28, 2017
- *Yazidi Women and Girls Resist ISIS in Creative Ways*, Women Under Siege, October 4, 2016.
- *Has Anyone Here Been Raped By ISIS?* The Daily Beast, May 18, 2015
- *Obama Went to War to Save Them, But They Can't Get US Visas*, The Daily Beast, September 18, 2014.
- *Advancing Access to Justice for Sex Trafficking Victims in Iraq*, American Bar Association, INTERNATIONAL LAW NEWS, Vol. 24 No. 4, Fall 2013.
- *The Role of Honor Related Violence in Sex Trafficking*, USAID Impact Blog, September 16, 2011.

Program Resources Developed

- A Guide for NGOs Assisting Individuals to Apply for Reparations Under the Yazidi [Female] Survivors' Law No. 8 of 2021, published by Taboo LLC with the Free Yazidi Foundation and Farida Global Organization (April 2025)
- Iraq Access to Justice Program, Best Practices Manual for Iraqi Community Based Legal Clinic Programs March 2012.
- Preventing Violence Against Women in Iraq: Attorney Practice Manual (2009).
- Mediating to Prevent Violence Against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan (2008).

Paper and Conference Presentations

- Terrors of Injustice: Gender Violence and Ethics of Shame, Co-presented paper, "Genocide, Rape and Careless Disregard: Media and the Problematic Portrayals of Yazidi Survivors of ISIS Captivity," Utrecht University, The Netherlands, October 4, 2018.
- The End of the World as We Know It? Eastern Sociological Society, Co-presented paper, "Voices of Yazidi Women: Perceptions of journalistic practices in the reporting on ISIS sexual violence," Philadelphia, February 23, 2017.
- National Endowment for Democracy, "Iraqi Kurdistan at the Crossroads: A Report on Civil Society, Washington, DC, June 21, 2017.
- Trust Women Conference, "Women Living Under Extremism, From ISIS to Boko Haram," London, November 2015.

Media Appearances, Presentations and Workshops

- International Documentary Association, *Documenting Survivors of Trauma*, October 6, 2021.
- Berlin Human Rights Film Festival, *What Makes Consent Meaningful*, September 22, 2021.
- TechCamp Colombia, *Ethical Engagement with the Media*, State Department, October 23, 2020.
- Berlin Human Rights Film Festival, *Storytelling as Empowerment Opening Remarks*, October 1, 2020.
- Coalition for Justice (C4J), *Ethical Engagement with the Media and Protecting Interests of Survivors*, June 8, 2020.
- *Voices of Yazidi Women*, Worldview, Chicago Public Radio, March 12, 2018.
- *Human Rights Lawyer on Legal Issues for Women and Girls in Iraq*, Worldview, Chicago Public Radio, August 15, 2017.
- *Life for Iraqi Women and Girls is Worsening*, Worldview, Chicago Public Radio, June 28, 2016.
- *The Yazidi Humanitarian Crisis*, Worldview, Chicago Public Radio, August 4, 2015.
- *Report Documents Violence Against Women and Girls*, Worldview, Chicago Public Radio, September 25, 2014.
- WCNY's *The Capitol Pressroom*, series on "Women, War & Peace," October 11, 2011.
- "Trafficking of Iraqi Women," Worldview, Chicago Public Radio, October 31, 2010.
- "Stopping Murders and Suicides of Iraqi Kurdistan Women," Worldview, Chicago Public Radio, July 23, 2009.
- Women's Rights in Iraqi Kurdistan," Worldview, Chicago Public Radio, July 30, 2008.
- "Sex, Honor & Shame; Confronting Violence Against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan", Worldview, Chicago Public Radio, March 10, 2006.