

# Sangeetha Iengar

Call: 2009

Contact Sangeetha Directly: 020 7353 6802 or



Sangeetha is an award-winning public law practitioner with over 15 years of experience as a specialist in asylum, immigration and international human rights law. She has carved her niche at the Bar by concentrating her practice on representing the most disadvantaged groups.

Sangeetha is ranked in the 2025 edition of the Legal 500 as a 'leading junior'; she is also winner of the International Pro Bono Barrister of the Year Award 2020 and was a finalist for both Rising Star, Women in the Law Awards 2020 and Barrister of the Year, Inspirational Women in the Law Award 2020.

Sangeetha regularly appears before the First Tier Tribunal, Upper Tribunal, High Court and Court of Appeal on asylum, immigration and deportation appeals as well as appearing before the Upper Tribunal and the Administrative Court in substantive judicial review claims. Instructing solicitors particularly recommended her for her technical precision on judicial review matters involving unlawful detention and claims of trafficking which has led to her having a busy Claimant-focused public law practice. Sangeetha's strength lies in her dedication to working with vulnerable clients – be that representing unaccompanied children, victims of torture or those suffering from complex mental health problems.

As a preferred international human rights expert, Sangeetha has advised individuals, international and non-governmental organisations on a wide range of public international and international human rights law issues. These cases have concerned matters of arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, and extra-judicial killing. She has also advised on the use of treaty-based and regional human rights complaint procedures.

She is currently instructed by Hogan Lovells and the Global Survivors Fund to advise on the feasibility of using international sanctions and terrorist financing legislation to fund reparations for Yazidi victims of sexual violence in conflict through a global fund.

As an immigration law expert, Sangeetha spent two years in Brussels working with the European Commission to improve the access to fundamental rights for undocumented children and families. In this role she was commissioned to publish a book, which was instrumental in broadening the discourse on irregular migration within the European institutions and member states.

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## Location

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She has spent several years 'on the ground' advising governments of fragile states and parties in conflict zones. This has involved advising Governments on improving access to justice for vulnerable communities, proposing structural improvements to formal criminal justice systems, advising on capital punishment cases, and implementing community-based justice solutions regionally. All of her work has focused on improving access to legal rights for the most vulnerable of communities.

Sangeetha has published policy papers and reports on a broad range of human rights, rule of law and migration issues. She has led and facilitated several trainings globally for DFID, the UK Foreign Office, the World Bank, UNDP and the European Commission (DEVCO).

A committed advocate, Sangeetha has had over 30 significant appearances giving expert legal opinion on immigration issues in the radio, TV and print media over the last 12 months alone. Sangeetha is a TEDx speaker and regularly gives keynote addresses. Her first **TEDx talk entitled 'Why Stripping Rights from Migrants Strips Rights from Everyone'** has been shortlisted to appear on TED.com.

Sangeetha is an active Associate Member of Border Criminologies, a department of the Faculty of Law at Oxford University. She sits on the Board of Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid, an NGO providing legal advice to asylum seekers in Lesbos, Greece and sits on the Global Advisory Panel of SAHR, an NGO striving to end impunity for SGBV.

Sangeetha is qualified to accept instructions via the **direct access** scheme.

### Publications

- November 2020 '**Finance for Restorative Justice**' Commissioned by by Hogan Lovells and the Global Survivors Fund
- March 2020 '**The EU have chosen strong borders over legal duties – The migrant crisis in Greece is the inevitable result of years of seeing the right to asylum as a weapon rather than an obligation**' Commissioned and published by The Times, UK
- March 2020 '**Europe's Borderlands: The New Shooting Range for European Power Politics**' Commissioned and published by Border Criminologies, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford
- April 2019 '**Greece: Dispossession through the guise of protection**' Published by Border Criminologies, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford
- December 2015 '**Explaining how to use a problem-driven iterative adaptation approach in restructuring pre-existing institutional reform programmes**' Produced for DFID through the LASER (Legal Assistance for Economic Reform) programme
- April 2015 '**An Assessment of Rigorous Impact Evaluations in Commercial Law and Justice Reforms**' Commissioned by DFID
- February 2015 '**The impact of the Ebola crisis on Sierra Leone's commercial law and justice priorities**' (*co-author*) Commissioned by the Justice Sector Coordination Office of Sierra Leone
- December 2014 '**Access to Legal Aid in Somaliland: Considering the Role of the Public Defender's Office in Somaliland Against a Demand-Side Analysis of Legal Aid Needs**' Commissioned by DFID, presented to the Ministry of Justice of Somaliland
- December 2014 '**Accessing Legal Aid in Somaliland: Considering the Role of Paralegals**' Commissioned by DFID, presented to the Ministry of Justice of Somaliland
- November 2014 '**The Importance of Associations: Developing a Bar Association for Somaliland**' Commissioned by DFID, presented to the Somaliland Women Lawyers Association and the Somaliland Lawyers Association
- January 2013 '**Children First and Foremost: A guide to the realising the rights of children and families in an irregular migration situation**' Published by PICUM, commissioned by the European Commission
- August 2012 '**The Rights of All Children in the Context of International Migration**' (*contributing*

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## Languages

- Tamil (native)
- French (fluent)
- Hindi (conversational)
- Spanish (conversational)
- Arabic (written only)

# Immigration

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## Notable Cases

- SO and Others – Led by Anthony Metzer QC, Sangeetha was instructed to advise eight prolific Turkish military pilots on the interpretation of the Refugee Convention and whether heavily guarded self-confinement in Greece complies with the socio-economic rights enshrined within the Convention;
- Shahoud and Shahud v The Hellenic Republic of Greece – successful intervention before the ECtHR involving two Syrian cousin asylum-seekers both suffering from motor disabilities. The case was landmark in setting precedent for the immediate evacuation of vulnerable asylum seekers from Lesbos following the fire which destroyed Camp Moria;
- Leka, R (on the application of) SSHD JR/4584/2015 – successful substantive JR concerning certification of protection claim involving threat of forced marriage to a minor;
- Liksenaj, R (on the application of) v SSHD JR/900/2016 – substantive JR certification challenge on a claim involving a longstanding victim of child sexual and physical abuse;
- Rhouila, R (on the application of) v SSHD JR/3793/2016 – successful substantive JR of a fresh claim in relation to foreign national family carers;
- Kaur, R (on the application of) v SSHD JR/10374/2016 – successful substantive JR challenge in a matter involving unlawful detention before the Administrative court; and
- SS (Pakistan) v SSHD C5/2016/2560 – Court of Appeal matter concerning the proper approach to be taken in cases concerning irregular migrants who act as whistleblowers for serious criminal investigations.

# Public Law

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Sangeetha is regularly instructed on high profile and complex challenges, including judicial reviews and public law considerations in a variety of cases. She draws upon expertise in several different areas, including immigration, EU law, and other areas of social welfare law.

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# Appointments

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- Part-time Judge, Immigration and Asylum Chamber
- Research Fellow on Climate Migration, University of Oxford

# Memberships

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- International Bar Association
- IBAHRI
- Justice
- Liberty
- Bar Human Rights Committee

# Awards

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- Winner "*International Pro Bono Barrister of the Year 2020*" – Bar Pro Bono Awards 2020
- Finalist "*Rising Star 2020*" – Women in the Law Awards 2020
- Finalist "*Barrister of the Year 2020*" – Inspirational Women in the Law Awards 2020

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