



# Maha Sardar

YEAR OF CALL: 2002



Maha has been working in the field of immigration, asylum and human rights for over fifteen years. She is a versatile barrister able to provide advice and representation to a wide range of clientele.

She represents asylum seekers and other vulnerable clients, as well as private clients who want assistance with their personal or business immigration matters.

She is very experienced with domestic and international jurisprudence on the Refugee Convention, European conventions (including ECHR, Istanbul Convention and ECAT) and international Human Rights conventions and standards.

Maha is regularly invited to speak and provide training on asylum, human rights, trafficking and immigration issues.

She is a contributing author to the leading immigration practitioner text, *Macdonald's Immigration Law and Practice*. She co-wrote the chapters on "visits and other temporary

purposes" and "Working, business and investment in the UK".

"Maha was very professional. She worked exceptionally hard to build a sound legal case, despite immense time pressures and the complicated nature of the application. She was also very approachable and cared about the case on a personal level, showing immense empathy, understanding and patience. We are deeply indebted to Maha for her amazing efforts."

PUBLIC ACCESS CLIENT, 2021

"I am so fortunate to have had a super barrister like Maha, I felt so strong and in control with Maha... I feel a sense of freedom after receiving this outcome... Thank you so much."

PUBLIC ACCESS CLIENT, 2021

"Maha's expertise and meticulous attention to detail were clearly evident in the comprehensive bundle that she helped compile in support of the case."

PUBLIC ACCESS CLIENT, 2021

"Maha advised me through my British citizenship application process, she made a very difficult and complicated process very easy to understand. Her knowledge of this area is first class. Thanks to Maha my British citizenship was approved."

PUBLIC ACCESS CLIENT, 2021

If you would like to get in touch with Maha please contact the clerking team:

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You can also contact Maha directly:

[mahas@gclaw.co.uk](mailto:mahas@gclaw.co.uk)

## REFUGEE LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

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Maha is a dynamic advocate regularly appearing in the First and Upper Tier Tribunals in asylum, human rights, deportation and deprivation appeals. She also represents applicants for bail.

She is passionate about the protection and representation of vulnerable clients, including victims of torture, unaccompanied minors and cases concerning FGM and [trafficking](#).

Maha is experienced in judicial review proceedings and was involved in the initial Rwanda litigation in the High Court and Court of Appeal in June 2022 where the Garden Court team secured injunctions at an emergency hearing before the Court of Appeal (Master of the Rolls and Singh, Simler LJJ) for asylum seekers due to be removed on the Home Office chartered plane to Rwanda.

She also acted in the judicial review cases of a high-profile Afghan judge and a female human rights defender challenging the lawfulness of the ARAP scheme and refusal to consider their LOTR applications: see *R (S and AZ) v Secretary of State for the Home Department and Secretary of State for Defence* [2022] EWCA Civ 1092 and *KBL v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2023] EWHC 87 (Admin).

Most recently Maha represented a high-profile Afghan female prosecutor, *AB*, where it was argued that she and other Afghans seeking to relocate to the UK, have been discriminated against pursuant to Article 14 ECHR, by comparison with the treatment of Ukrainian nationals by the Government: *AB v SSHD* [2023] EWHC 287 (Admin).

## IMMIGRATION LAW

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Maha has considerable experience with private immigration matters having worked in the private client team at Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP and other private firms where she assisted individuals with a wide range of immigration services. She is experienced in the Points Based System, family-based applications, nationality, visit visas and EEA applications, among others.

During her time in the corporate sector, Maha gained commercial skills and business acumen representing numerous high net-worth and high-profile clients. In addition, she has advised companies applying for sponsor licences and has drafted representations and grounds successfully challenging Home Office decisions to refuse, suspend or revoke their licences.

Maha co-wrote the widely acclaimed chapter on the new Points Based System in *Macdonald's Immigration Law and Practice*.

## **PRO BONO**

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Maha welcomes pro bono instructions in asylum and human rights cases. She regularly acts for BID in immigration bail applications before the First-tier Tribunal.

## **PUBLIC ACCESS**

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Maha is registered with the Bar Council for public access work and regularly assists private clients in their personal and business immigration matters.

## **BACKGROUND**

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Prior to joining chambers, Maha worked with numerous human rights organisations including Refugee and Migrant Justice (RMJ, formerly RLC), Reprieve and the UNHCR. She has an unwavering commitment to human rights and humanitarian issues, not only through her work but also in a personal capacity, including visiting refugee camps and delivering aid and food to displaced people.

Maha regularly assists vulnerable clients on a pro-bono basis. In 2018 she was approached by charity Goodwill Caravan to represent a Syrian boy and his mother living in Greece. Najib suffered life-threatening injuries when he was caught in an airstrike in his hometown in Homs. Maha assisted Najib and his mother obtain a visa so that he could undergo life-saving medical treatment at Great Ormond Street hospital. Najib's story has been covered by [Sky News](#).

Maha is very experienced with domestic and international jurisprudence on the Refugee Convention, European conventions (including ECHR, Istanbul Convention and ECAT) and international

Human Rights conventions and standards. She has produced two reports for the Council of Europe (COE) and is currently working on a country-wide Human Rights audit for an international Government.

## **TRAINING AND SEMINARS**

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Maha has provided training in Human Rights in various settings. For several years she regularly gave diversity awareness training at Hendon Police College where recruits were trained to become police officers. She taught the importance of cultural awareness and religious sensitivities in the community, with its consequential impact on Human Rights.

Whilst living in Turkey, Maha provided a training session on The Assessment of the Credibility of Asylum Seekers to new UNHCR employees in Ankara. Over the course of the academic year in 2013 she delivered lectures to students at Bogazici University in Istanbul entitled Introduction to Human Rights.

Maha is also a regular trainer with HJT Training where she delivers sessions on a wide range of immigration and asylum matters.

She is currently working on a personal non-profit social enterprise project for refugees in the UK. She is developing an App called Belong to provide the tools, information, contacts and connections that will assist refugees to become fully functioning members of society and provide a sense of belonging in their new home.

## **PUPILLAGE**

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Maha completed her pupillage at Garden Court Chambers under the supervision of Sonali Naik QC. As a pupil she assisted in the preparation of the Court of Appeal and Upper Tribunal case of HM (Iraq) on the safety of returns of Iraqi asylum seekers to Baghdad.

She also worked on the case of KA (Afghanistan) in the Court of Appeal concerning unaccompanied asylum-seeking children from Afghanistan and the Secretary of State's duty to trace their family members.

Maha also represented criminal defendants in both the magistrates and crown courts. Maha's representation of a high-profile individual in the criminal courts has received media coverage.

## EDUCATION

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University College London, 2:1 – LLB Law Degree

Inns of Court School of Law, Very Competent – Bar Vocational Course

School of Oriental and African Studies, Distinction – MA International and Comparative Legal Studies

### Courses:

Leading Non Violent Movements for Social Progress, Harvard Kennedy School Executive Program

Global Diplomacy: Diplomacy in the Modern World, SOAS

Global Diplomacy: The United Nations in the World, SOAS

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

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JUSTICE

Lincoln's Inn

Bar Human Rights Committee

## LANGUAGES

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Urdu

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