

Bunafsha Gulakova, **Advisor – International Law**

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Born and raised in Tajikistan, Ms. Gulakova is a law school graduate of the Tajik State National University, a former Public Interest Law Fellow at the Law School of Columbia University in the City of New York, USA and holds a Master of Studies degree in International Human Rights Law from the University of Oxford, UK. She commenced practising law in 1995 in Dushanbe as an attorney with the international law firm Contract, working in the field of criminal defence representing the rights of the vulnerable, underprivileged and political detainees.

Ms. Gulakova was one of the founders and formerly the Director of the Bureau on Human Rights and Rule of Law in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, an NGO which initiated the provision of free legal assistance to vulnerable groups in the country in 1998. Under her supervision the Bureau became one of the most prominent non-profit legal defence organizations which succeeded in applying international mechanisms of human rights defence such as ICCPR, CRC, CEDWA and CERD for the benefit of the citizens of Tajikistan. The legal staff of the Bureau was trained in assisting individuals in drafting communications to the Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasburg. Ms. Gulakova also successfully fundraised for projects enabling the conduct of the first, and later annual, Summer School on International Public Law for law school graduates, as well as the first Festival on Human Rights Documentary Festival in Tajikistan.

Ms. Gulakova furthered her international experience by providing her legal expertise to projects with institutions including the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Human Rights Watch, the International Centre for Transitional Justice, the UN Office of Internal Oversight and the European Commission.

Most recently, in 2007 Ms. Gulakova joined the International Development Law Organization in its Mission to Afghanistan for strengthening the rule of law. As a Criminal Justice Counsel, she helped to advance the legal protection of human rights by advising Afghanistan National Council on Human Rights, the Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary and legal defence NGOs. She also succeeded in compiling the first Glossary on Human Rights and International Law in the native language for legal practitioners and law school students in Afghanistan.

In 2008 Ms. Gulakova continued her career in the Middle East, where she joined UNDP Iraq as a Human Rights Awareness and Community Engagement Expert with the mission of advocating for an independent oversight mechanism (ombudsman) on police and community relations in the governorate of Basrah. She contributed to building the capacity of the police by conducting needs assessment missions, drafting recommendations and sample laws for the Governorate's Council.

Ms. Gulakova is multi-lingual with fluency in English, Tajik, Russian, Farsi/Dari and ability in Arabic. She is the author of several international publications and has made international presentations including “*International Adoption: the good, the bad and the ugly*” to the International Bar Association World Congress, Prague, 2005 and “*Towards the Establishment of a Death Penalty Free Zone in Central Asia*” to the III World Congress Against the Death Penalty, Paris, 2007.

Ms. Gulakova was awarded the title of *Personnalité d'Avenir*” by the French Foreign Ministry. She was also honoured by being awarded: an International Bar Association Scholarship for Young Professionals (London, 2005); an OSI/Chevening Scholarship for Further Studies in Law (Oxford, 2003-2005); and, a Justice Initiative Scholarship for post-graduate studies in law (2002).