

Samar Ali

Research Professor of Political Science and Law at Vanderbilt University

Nashville, TN, US

Expert in the intersection of conflict mediation, national security, economic development and human rights.

Biography

Samar Ali's research initiatives focus on positive compromise through promoting conflict-resolution best practices among people, communities and nations experiencing polarization due to the connection between violence and labeling. Ali joined Vanderbilt's political sciences and law faculties as a research professor with 14 years of experience in international relations and legal practice. She began her legal career as a law clerk to Judge Gilbert S. Merritt Jr. of the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals and then clerked for Justice Edwin Cameron during his tenure on the Constitutional Court of South Africa. In 2007, she joined Hogan Lovell US in Washington D.C., helping to establish the firm's Middle Eastern practice in the United Arab Emirates. She left the firm in 2010 when she was named a White House Fellow in President Barack Obama's administration. During her fellowship, she worked closely with U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano on counterterrorism measures, gaining experience with bilateral negotiations on behalf of the U.S. government and later joined former President Jimmy Carter as part of an international delegation observing Egypt's 2012 presidential election. After returning to Tennessee to practice law, she joined the administration of Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam as the state's assistant commissioner of international affairs, supporting Tennessee's global relations. The five-year international strategy plan she helped develop laid the framework for Tennessee's international economic development footprint. In addition to her legal practice at Bass Berry & Sims, Ali co-founded and has served as a director of the Lodestone Advisory Group, a boutique consulting firm that specializes in growth strategies through innovation, venture capital, global markets and transformation. She is also president and CEO of Millions of Conversations, a nonprofit organization that aims to unite Americans around common values for a shared future by fostering dialogue among those who hold different opinions, views or beliefs.

Areas of Expertise

Human Rights, National Security, Polarization, Cybersecurity, Law and Government, Middle East, Conflict Resolution, International Affairs, Economic Development

Education

Vanderbilt University

J.D. Law

Vanderbilt University

B.S.

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