



## Nina Tavakoli

Call: 2014

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Nina is described as “*an incredibly bright and committed lawyer who understands the nuance of her subject matter.*” **Legal 500 2019**

She specialises in international and domestic criminal law. Nina qualified and practiced as a commercial litigation solicitor at Hogan Lovells before transferring to the bar. She is ranked in leading UK legal directories Chambers and Partners and Legal 500 for international crime. According to the rankings she is “*very bright and extremely committed to her cases and clients, she will go the extra mile to ensure the delivery of exceptionally high-quality work. She is a barrister who confronts challenges.*”

She has extensive experience in genocide and war crimes prosecutions having been instructed in cases before the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the War Crimes Chamber of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her cases have been ground breaking including the successful prosecution of Liberian President Charles Taylor. She has been appointed to the lists of Counsel both for the Defence and Victims at the Kosovo Specialist Chambers.

Recently she has focused on the investigation and documentation of international crimes particularly sexual violence and torture perpetrated in Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

In the UK, Nina defends and prosecutes in the Crown Court. She also practices in extradition.

### **International Representation**

Nina has practiced extensively at several international criminal tribunals as a prosecutor and legal adviser, specifically at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the War Crimes Chamber of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina on a number of high profile and ground-breaking cases. Nina holds a masters’ degree in international public law from the London School of Economics. She is a contributor to the forthcoming edition of the leading practitioner textbook on international criminal law Blackstone's International Criminal Practice, (OUP).

Nina is recognised as an expert on sexual and gender based violence crimes by the UK government

which has appointed her a member of its team of independent experts on preventing sexual violence in conflict (PSVI). She is also a member of the JRR-UN Women sexual and gender based violence roster of experts.

She has extensive experience working with survivors of sexual violence and torture, particularly men. She has also been appointed by the UK government as a member of its team of independent justice experts in post-conflict and fragile states.

Nina is consulted by a range of institutions and non-governmental organisations to advise and provide training on a wide range of international criminal law and human rights issues within her expertise including torture, sexual and gender based violence, human trafficking and terrorism.

## **International Advisory Work**

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Recent advisory work includes:

- **2018:** Nina led a team of lawyers to file an amicus curiae brief on behalf of Bangladeshi NGOs at the International Criminal Court (ICC) asserting that the ICC is authorised to exercise jurisdiction over the deportation of more than 670,000 Rohingya from Myanmar to Bangladesh.
- **2017/2018:** Nina advised the UK Foreign Office on the Rohingya crisis. Nina was deployed to Bangladesh in her role as one of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's independent experts in sexual violence in conflict (PSVI).

## **International Courts**

### **International Courts**

- **Kosovo Specialist Chambers (2018)** Appointed to the list of specialist counsel for the Defence and Victims.
- **Special Court for Sierra Leone (2011-2013), Charles Taylor.** Prosecution appeals counsel in the case of the former president of Liberia. Taylor was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity including the use of child soldiers, murder, rape and torture committed by rebel forces in the Sierra Leonean civil war.  
Press Links: [BBC](#)
- **United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (2007-2011)** Legal adviser to international judges including the Tribunal President and Vice President in numerous trials of senior Rwandan government and political figures for genocide:

- **Bizimungu et. al.** Four ministers in the Rwandan Government acquitted of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- **Nchamihigo**, a deputy prosecutor, was convicted of instigating, ordering and aiding and abetting genocide, and crimes against humanity.
- **Bikindi**, a Rwandan singer, was convicted of direct and public incitement to genocide arising from hate speech. Press Links: [New York Times](#)
- **Ntawukulyayo**, a regional politician, was convicted of aiding and abetting and ordering genocide.
- **Gatete**, a regional politician, was convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity.
- **Munyakazi & Kayishema**, two cases where the Chamber denied the prosecution's application to extradite the accused to Rwanda on the basis that they would not face a fair trial. These decisions were subsequently relied on by the English High Court in extradition proceedings in **Bajinya et. al v. The Government of Rwanda and the Secretary of State for the Home Department** [2009] EWHC 770.
- **War Crimes Chamber of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, BiH (2005)** Legal advisor in the defence office.

## Crime

Nina has 15 years' experience as a lawyer. She was called to the UK Bar in 2014. However, the 11 years she spent as a solicitor before this gives her experience and maturity which goes well beyond her call.

Nina regularly appears in the Crown Courts, defending and prosecuting. She is particularly adept at fraud (including POCA) and financial services work given her background as a commercial litigation solicitor at Hogan Lovells. Her clients included major UK and investment banks, insurers, global manufacturing companies, pharmaceutical, and tobacco companies.

She is comfortable dealing with exceptionally voluminous cases given her extensive litigation experience both in the City of London and internationally working on complex cases lasting several years with an attendant page count.

Along with fraud, she covers the gamut of crime, including serious violence; sexual offences; arson; perverting the course of justice; dishonesty; weapons; drugs; robbery; and road traffic. She has also assisted in preparing the successful defence of the first ever FGM case to be tried in the UK.

## Extradition

## **Extradition**

Nina practices in extradition acting both for the judicial authority and requested persons. She has appeared in the High Court on behalf of the judicial authority.

## **Publications, Lectures and Training**

### **Publications**

*Blackstone's International Criminal Practice*, chapter author, OUP, (forthcoming, 2018).

A crime that offends the conscience of humanity: a proposal to reclassify trafficking in women as an international crime, *International Criminal Law Review* 9 (2009).

### **Lectures/Presentations**

2018 – Guest speaker at a conference on Violence against Women and Girls organised by the UK Embassy, Colombia.

2015 - Participant and speaker at Expert Meeting on Customary International Law, Geneva Academy of International Law and Human Rights, Geneva.

2014 - Expert participant at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, London.

2014 - Guest speaker and panelist at United Nations Symposium on the Legacy of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Tanzania.

2013 - Guest speaker at the 2013 Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Conference on combatting sexual violence crimes in the Arab world in the context of the 'Arab Spring', Amman, Jordan.

2013 - Lecturer at American University of Paris on international criminal law.

### **Training**

Training Middle Eastern NGOs on the establishment of national mechanisms to combat impunity for sexual violence crimes committed in conflict.

Assisting the UN Office of Drugs and Crime in Abuja, to train Nigerian lawyers from the Nigerian National Police Force and Department of State Security on the successful prosecution of terrorism.

## **Recommendations and Rankings**

*“An incredibly bright and committed lawyer who understands the nuance of her subject matter.”*

Legal 500 2019

*A "seasoned professional."*

Chambers and Partners 2019

"She is very bright, has strong interpersonal skills and is hugely enjoyable to work with."

Chambers and Partners 2019

*A "hard-working team player" with "exceptional legal skills" who attracts plaudits for her "ability to quickly identify key components of issues and prepare clear and concise written submissions."*

Chambers and Partners 2018

*"Very bright and extremely committed to her cases and clients, she will go the extra mile to ensure the delivery of exceptionally high-quality work. She is a barrister who confronts challenges."*

Chambers and Partners 2018

*"Bright, articulate and unrelenting in getting the best result for her client."*

Chambers and Partners 2018

*"She has excellent interpersonal skills reflected in her capacity to listen closely to her clients. Nina helps them to talk about topics which they find confusing or painful, or which they feel ashamed about."*

Chambers and Partners 2018

## **Education**

LLM Public International Law - London School of Economics

BA History (Hons) - University of Birmingham

## **Memberships**

Bar Human Rights Committee

Criminal Bar Association

South Eastern Circuit