

# MARYUM SAIFEE

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## Experience

### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

#### *Senior Advisor, Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy*

*January 2023- present*

- Leads press and public diplomacy strategy for the State Department's newly launched Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy; liaises across the Department, with U.S. missions around the world and with colleagues across the interagency to advance U.S. policy related to cyberspace, digital technologies, and digital policy.

#### *Senior Advisor, Secretary's Office of Diversity and Inclusion*

*July 2021- December 2022*

- Launched press and public diplomacy operations for the inaugural office at the State Department focused on advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). Designed and implemented communications rollout for the State Department's first five-year DEIA strategic plan, which was praised by the White House as one of the most robust plans across the interagency.

#### *Instructor, Foreign Service Institute*

*February 2021-July 2021*

- Trainer in the Foreign Service Institute's Transition Center focused on building resilience and a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive foreign affairs community.

### TRUMAN CENTER FOR NATIONAL POLICY

#### *Senior Visiting Fellow, New York, NY*

*November 2020-February 2021*

- Led a 30+ member Task Force on transforming the U.S. Department of State into a more just and equitable institution with a focus on equity, inclusion, and innovation.

### COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

#### *International Affairs Fellow, Human Rights Foundation, New York, NY*

*October 2018 –October 2019*

- Senior advisor for the Human Rights Foundation where I led strategy on a variety of initiatives, including #TheFreedomDrive campaign, a roadtrip across the United States featuring Saudi dissident Manal al Sharif and her call for the release of jailed activists and the dismantling of the guardianship system. The campaign helped lift the ban on women traveling without a male guardian's permission.

### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

#### *Foreign Service Officer, various locations*

*September 2008 – October 2018*

- 2017-18, **U.S. Consulate Lahore, Pakistan** | *Acting Public Affairs chief and spokesperson*  
Managed press operations for Punjab, the most populous state in Pakistan, during a time of regional instability and a national political transition; Managed 10 staff and over \$2 million in grants advancing job creation, youth entrepreneurship, education, and gender equality.

- 2016-17, **Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues**, Washington D.C. | *Senior Policy Advisor*  
Led the U.S. government's response to combat Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). As a survivor of FGM myself, I leveraged my story and amplified the voices of other survivors to shape policy; Secured over \$1 million in new funding and created Embassy toolkits to strengthen anti-FGM advocacy.
- 2015-16, **Secretary's Office of Religion and Global Affairs**, Washington D.C. | *Policy Advisor*  
Steered the first strategic dialogue between civil society and the Secretary of State on gender, religion, and peacebuilding; Drafted policy memos persuading overseas posts to activate faith-based communities in their activities around the global response to the Paris Climate negotiations.
- 2013-15, **Bureau of International Organization Affairs**, Washington D.C. | *Policy Advisor*  
Provided policy guidance on regional organizations in the Middle East, specifically the Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council, and oversaw the implementation of the first Memorandum of Understanding between the Arab League and the State Department.
- 2011-12, **U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq** | *Vice Consul*  
Adjudicated Special Immigrant Visas for Iraqis who had risked their lives working for the U.S. government. I also spent three months in Erbil where I conducted outreach at universities and Syrian refugee camps in Kurdistan.
- 2009-11, **U.S. Embassy Cairo, Egypt** | *Deputy Cultural Attaché*  
Managed over a dozen exchange programs, including the Fulbright program; Designed programs engaging youth on transitional justice and political participation in the immediate aftermath of Mubarak's ouster and the Arab Spring.

#### **AMERICORPS VOLUNTEER**

*Outreach Manager, Chaya, Seattle, WA*

*September 2002 – October 2003*

- Developed outreach strategy to reach South Asian survivors of domestic violence that involved engaging with faith leaders from Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh communities. Created briefings on post 9-11 anti-immigrant backlash for educators responding to racially-motivated bullying.

#### **PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER**

*English teacher, Jordan Valley, Jordan*

*July 2000-August 2002*

- Designed curricula and taught English language to students and computer courses for teachers at a secondary school for girls in the Jordan valley, on the East Bank of the Jordan River.

### **Consulting**

#### **WOMEN DELIVER**

*Senior Manager for Research, New York, NY*

*October 2019 – February 2020*

- Built an organization-wide research strategy and led a team of two associates in the commissioning of new research products in reproductive rights and climate change.

## **FORD FOUNDATION**

*Search Consultant, New York, NY*

*June 2007-September 2008*

- Managed the recruitment and selection process for Program Officers in the Criminal Justice and Asset Building portfolios, as well as the West Africa Regional Representative.

## **ACUMEN FUND**

*Summer Associate, New York, NY*

*June 2006 – August 2006*

- After an organization-wide rebrand, developed communication products to highlight Acumen Fund investments in South Asia and East Africa.

## **Education**

### **COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK, NY**

M.A., International Affairs, 2007

### **UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, AUSTIN, TX**

B.A., Government, 1999

## **Awards and Affiliations**

2022, Council on Foreign Relations Life Member

2022, Foreign Service Journal, Editorial Board Member

2022, Women inPower Fellow

2020, Senior Visiting Fellow, Truman National Security Project

2019, Scholar, Presidential Leadership Scholars

2019, International Affairs Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations

2019, Rosie McGrath Activist Award, There is No Limit Foundation

2017, Superior Honor Award recipient, U.S. Department of State

2016, Meritorious Honor Award recipient, U.S. Department of State

2015, Term Member, Council on Foreign Relations

2012, Meritorious Honor Award recipient, U.S. Embassy Baghdad

2011, Meritorious Honor Award recipient, U.S. Embassy Cairo

2005, Editorial Assistant, Columbia University Journal of International Affairs

## **Publications**

2022 | Task Force Contributor, Truman Center for National Policy | [City and State Diplomacy Taskforce](#)

2022 | Author, Foreign Service Journal | [Subnational Diplomacy: A National Security Imperative](#)

2022 | Author, State Department Blog | [Honoring an Ancestor, Carrying Forward a Legacy](#)

2022 | Author, State Magazine | [Crowdsourced Digital Storytelling Campaign Bolsters #FacingDiplomacy](#)

## Campaign

2021 | Task Force Lead, Truman Center for National Policy | [Transforming State: Pathways to a More Just, Equitable, and Innovative Institution](#)

2021 | Author, Just Security | [Why Reconciling Domestic and Global Human Rights Policy is a National Security Imperative](#)

2021 | Author, Council on Foreign Relations Blog | [Why Ending FGM Advances U.S. Interests](#)

2020 | Author, Ms. Magazine | [FGM's #MeToo Moment](#)

2019 | Author, NPR's Weekend Edition with Scott Simon | [Speaking out against FGM](#)

2016 | Author, The Guardian | [I'm a survivor of female genital cutting and I'm speaking out](#)

2007 | Author, Arab Studies Journal Book Review | [The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'i Islam](#)

## Languages

Arabic (proficient oral/ written), Spanish (proficient oral/ written)