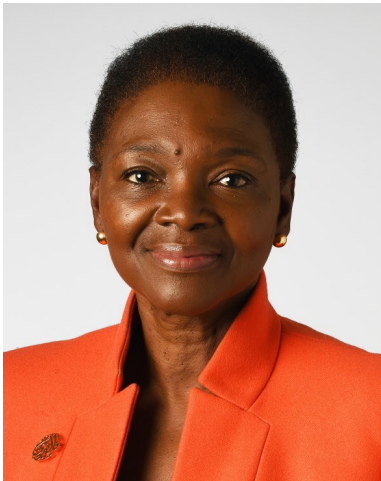


Sherin Nassar

The 2017-18 John Loiello AFSOAS FISHL Scholar



Introduction



We are pleased to present this report on Sherin Nassar's time at SOAS. Sherin has made excellent progress in her studies here, as evidenced by her acceptance to Harvard Law School.

Scholarships are vital to helping us achieve our mission, enabling the best students from around the world to pursue studies at SOAS without barriers of finance or personal circumstance.

Sherin has been able to realise her full potential and achieve her goals, not just here at SOAS but in the longer term because of your support.

Thank you again for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Valerie Amos". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a long, horizontal, slightly curved line that tapers at both ends, serving as a decorative underline.

Baroness Valerie Amos CH
Director, SOAS University of London

Sherin Nassar

MSc Development
Studies



“SOAS gave me the opportunity to be surrounded by like minded individuals who challenge your conceptions, force you to look at your own lack of awareness, and own up to how you can effectively challenge a system that many conform to.”

My favourite memory at SOAS was one of the first nights after class sitting in the JCR listening to an Afrobeats band play the drums. The vibe of the night spoke to the heart of what SOAS was as an institution: a place where people from so many different cultures and backgrounds could come together and feel welcome in a space. The JCR itself that night was calm, relaxed, and served as a place for everyone to just enjoy the moment. I remember exhaling in that moment-maybe from all the anxiety I had going to a predominantly white institution for undergrad or having all these unspoken emotions about race and realizing for the first time I was in a space where people just got it-and that was a really beautiful moment. It spoke to what my experience over the last few months at SOAS has been-incredibly comfortable, as if I always was meant to be here.

I want use my education to make real change in the world. I want to fight for the rights of the people-it sounds clichéd, but the world is rapidly changing and diversity is becoming something that is scorned. With that, we are seeing more and more people losing their rights to education, health, access to critical resources, such as water, and even the rights to politically engage with their political systems. These issues are incredibly apparent in contexts like Egypt where many of the young people who participated in the Egyptian revolution, some of the most influential and smart people that exist today, are imprisoned. These people are critical to promoting a better world and I want to help protect them and their rights to change-I'm not sure exactly how to do that yet without getting bogged down by the ivory towers of academia and the glossy floors of law firms but I know a law degree will at least give me the tools to actually start creating international legal frameworks to help and represent them (and maybe even the money to bail them out of jail).

My time at SOAS will have a lasting impact on

my life. SOAS gave me the opportunity to be surrounded with like-minded individuals who challenge your conceptions, force you to acknowledge your own lack of awareness, critically engage with what you learn in class through real world experience, and own up to how you can effectively challenge a system that many conform to. Academically, it has changed my understanding of the Middle East and made me a far more critical thinker. I will take this knowledge and apply it closely as I study international human rights law at Harvard Law School.

It seems like a natural step in the direction I want to take. I came to SOAS for the diverse learning atmosphere but more specifically to gain a better understanding of economic development in the Middle Eastern context. I want to take this knowledge and the connections from the people I've met to Harvard where I hope to gain a legal degree that will allow me to practice International Law-where my SOAS degree will highly influence the contexts I work in and the people I've met here will be invaluable assets for making real change in the world.

Ultimately, Harvard is an incredible institution with a global brand (though it's no SOAS) and will help me to meet the right people to gain the influence to make change. At the same time, I know that my learning at SOAS will be that much more important as I enter a space that is relatively conservative in comparison and I'll need the memories from SOAS to remember that there is an army of people who do think like me and those are the people I will rely on to get the change I want done in the world.

Thank you for your support in making this journey possible!



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