

Shanthi Sivakumaran



Call: 2015

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Profile

Shanthi has experience as Counsel to Inquiry and as Junior Counsel to Core Participants to Inquiries.

She is currently instructed as Junior Counsel to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, a position she has held since 2017. She is also instructed as Junior Counsel to Category H (women who were deceived into relationships) and Category F (families of deceased children whose identities were stolen) in the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

Shanthi's practice has been informed by her experience working with local community groups in the UK and internationally into her work. Before coming to the Bar, Shanthi worked in international development policy and human rights. She coordinated a network of civil society organisations from Africa and Asia advocating on international development policy. She was regularly invited as a Panel Speaker on human rights and development by UN Agencies and International NGOs and has spoken at events held in Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand, Switzerland and Vietnam.

Shanthi is committed to access to justice and is happy to provide pro bono advice to campaign groups and NGOs.

What the Directories say

In Legal 500 2024, Shanthi is ranked as a 'rising star'. She is described as *'an exceptionally diligent and rigorous counsel. She is extremely well-organised and has a preternatural grasp of detail.'*

In Legal 500 2023, Shanthi is also ranked as a 'rising star'. She is described as *'Committed to her client's cause and a very industrious practitioner- excellent attention to detail.'*

What others say

"She is very good with clients, she makes them feel confident about their case, she empowers them whilst at the same time ensuring that complex areas of law can be understood. She is also careful in her approach and can ease clients through potential legal problems in their cases." (Solicitor)

Education

Pegasus Paris Bar Exchange

Bar Professional Training Course, University of Law

Exhibition Award, Inner Temple

LLM International Human Rights Law, SOAS, University of London

LLB English with European Law, University of Leeds

Erasmus Exchange Programme, Université de Jean-Moulin III, France

Languages

French

Related practice areas

Inquests and Public Inquiries

Immigration

Administrative & Public Law

International Law

International Criminal Law

Immigration Detention Group

Public Inquiries

Shanthi specialises in public inquiries and inquests and is instructed in three major Public Inquiries. She has insight into the differing perspectives in a public inquiry having been instructed on behalf of core participants and as Counsel to Inquiry. She is adept at analysing large bodies of evidence and cutting through to the key issues.

Since 2017, Shanthi has been instructed as Junior Counsel to the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry. She has maintained a key role supporting Lead Counsel in Phase 1 and continues to work closely with Lead Counsel to the Inquiry in the preparations for Phase 2.

She is also instructed as Junior Counsel to Category H Core Participants (women who were deceived into relationships) and Category F Core Participants (families of deceased children whose identities were stolen) in the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

Recently Shanthi has been instructed on behalf of groups with an interest in the Covid-19 Public Inquiry.

Inquests

Shanthi is regularly instructed on behalf of bereaved families in Article 2 jury inquests. She has particular experience in deaths in prison custody, mental health and psychiatric detention and following police contact. Shanthi is known for working well with instructing solicitors and her client focused approach.

Immigration and Asylum Law

Shanthi has substantial experience in immigration and asylum law accepting instructions in judicial review challenges, and statutory appeals related to asylum, human rights, EEA Law, deportation and trafficking. She regularly acts in the High Court, Upper Tribunal and First-tier Tribunal. Shanthi is known for her calm and reassuring manner when representing vulnerable adults and children in particular in asylum claims and human trafficking cases.

She also has experience advising on issues related to British citizenship, including applications for naturalisation.

She represents Bail for Immigration Detainees on a pro bono basis.

Administrative and Public Law

Shanthi has a broad public law and human rights practice. She is able to advise on the scope of judicial review, procedure and costs risks. She is adept at identifying innovative means to advance a case and raise issues in the context of strategic litigation.

She is regularly instructed in cases raising issues related to immigration and asylum law. She has a particular interest in challenging unjustified discrimination in Home Office policies affecting vulnerable migrant communities. In 2017, Shanthi was instructed as Junior Counsel in the landmark High Court challenge to the policy of removing EEA nationals for rough sleeping **R (oao Gureckis & ors) v SSHD** [2017] EWHC 3298 (Admin).

Drawing on her background working with a broad range of civil society organisations, she understands community organisers and activist groups and is able to advise them on potential public law challenges to policies affecting their communities.

International Criminal Law

Shanthi has a particular interest in international crimes and their prosecution in national jurisdictions as well as international tribunals. She has advised on the application of universal jurisdiction principles in potential prosecutions for war crimes.

Shanthi was instructed by Public Interest Law Centre to advise Tamil Information Centre on the prospects of a prosecution for war crimes committed by Keenie-Meenie Services (KMS), British mercenaries, in Sri Lanka during the civil war. She drafted a complaint on behalf of Tamil Information Centre to the Metropolitan Polices Service (MPS) inviting them to open an investigation into KMS. Following receipt of the complaint, the MPS moved their scoping exercise into a full investigation.

Shanthi has extensive knowledge of the law on diplomatic immunity and can advise on cases raising these issues. She was instructed as Junior Counsel in the private prosecution of Brigadier Fernando, a former Sri Lankan Diplomat, for threatening protestors. This is a seminal case considering residual diplomatic immunity in the criminal jurisdiction.

She has experience of international criminal tribunals following a placement with the Defence Team for Mustafa Baddredine, the former military leader of Hezbollah, at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.