Michele Storms: Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you so much for being here. This is the Gates Public Service Law Speaker Series, and we are always so happy to be able to bring into the community people who can share their experiences about public interest, public service work and experiences in the law and ways that they are helping to make our world a better place with their law degrees. So, today, we're very fortunate to have someone who is a graduate of this law school, Karen Hanrahan. And her focus today is really going to be about human rights fieldwork. But, let me back up and say a little bit about her, and then I'm going to turn the floor over.

When could you not say we're in troubled times? Well, OK, so we're in troubled times, and some of our troubles are all around the world. And the need for human rights advocacy, the need for strengthening of rule of law - and she'll say more about her perspective on that, I think - is so critical.

And we are now, in this country, in a time of changing leadership, and what is that going to mean to the work that is happening in many unstable environments and war-torn environments? And our speaker has lived and worked in Iraq and in Afghanistan, as well as many other places, and has perspective about what is happening in those places now and what we could hope for in the future.

She came recommended to us by Professor Anita Ramasastry, who, as you all know, is always working internationally and doing good work around corporate responsibility and human rights issues. So, she comes well-recommended.

She's currently the vice president of international peace and stability at L3 and dealing with corporate strategy planning and expansion efforts in the areas of post-conflict stability and reconstruction.

Before that position, which she's had for the past two years, she'd worked with the US Department of State as an Iraq rule-of-law coordinator, as a senior rule-of-law coordinator in Baghdad. She's worked with the US Agency for International Development as an advisor on human rights and transitional justice. She's worked with Amnesty International, focusing on advocacy in Middle East and North Africa.

Before law school, she was still engaged in international issues, particularly looking at conflict resolution, and then came to law school to add a law degree to her list of [laughs] degrees and abilities to work and advocate with a wider range of tools.

In addition to her law degree here, she has a degree from the American University School of International Service. She's studied in both Morocco and Australia as well and gotten degrees and certificates, speaks Arabic and has proficiency in French - and probably something else too.

[laughs] At least English, right?
And we're just really honored and excited that she can share her experiences with us and have a little time for dialog with us, as I know, looking around the room, how many of you are very concerned about rule of law and human rights. So, this is a great opportunity.

So, please join me in welcoming Karen Hanrahan.

[applause]

Karen Hanrahan: Am I on? Yes, I am on. Hello, everyone. Thanks for having me here today. The first thing I'm going to do is apologize. I think, I'm going against an important stricture of public speaking by apologizing. And that's because, actually, I have written some things down here, and although I'm not going to read it word for word, it's going to help me stick to the time limit and stop me from sort of wandering off into interesting stories that I find interesting. Given the topic, I don't know if you will.

But, I'm honored to be invited back to the law school to speak with you about public service, and being a human rights lawyer in particular. I was originally asked to speak for about 40 minutes, but I don't think either of us could stand that long of me speaking, so I'm going to try to stick to about 20 to 30 minutes and use most of the rest of the time for questions. I do want to also say, feel free to raise your hand and ask a question at any time during the middle of the talk.

In the next half-hour, I hope to broaden your perspectives a little bit on our noble profession, move away from some of the formality of the courtrooms, from the pristine, first-world law order, and into some of the more sort of dusty, dangerous areas of human rights law practice.

I'm not going to be academic. I'm not going to go into the sort of fine lines of human rights laws and issues, or really even talk about any groundbreaking ideas. But, I'm going to talk about something that's important to me, which is the practice of human rights law in the field. And I think that's one of the biggest gaps in terms of where the human rights movement is today. I think, one of the biggest needs is in the area of practice.

So, as background, you've heard my background, so I won't repeat any of that. Although, my work in Afghanistan was with the United Nations, so I've had experience with a wide range of agencies - Department of State, USAID, the UN, a few NGOs, including Amnesty International, Search for Common Ground, and now a private company. And I did practice law for a few years at White and Case, so a big, corporate law firm. That helped me pay off a lot of my school loans, and learn a lot of important things as well.

So, again, I'll try to spend the next half-hour talking about, trying to sort of bring you into the blindingly beige deserts of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Let me see... I'm sorry.

Again, I'm going to use the first-person singular a lot. Not because I want to make this an autobiography, but because I've found that the practice of human rights law is very personal. It's an intensely personal experience, and I think it's one of the most up-close and personal of the legal disciplines.

In my view, the best way to convey what I believe are the challenges and rewards of the practice of human rights law is to share with you my experiences, both the good ones and the bad ones.

I'm going to share a few quick points right now on the human rights movement and conflict, so
please bear with me for a minute. Then I'll move on to, again, more of some of the things that I've done.

I think, the human rights movement has made a lot of progress in the last century, but we have a long way to go. And I think that we need more and better human rights lawyers to advance the movement.

I think, the past century has seen a record of abuses unsurpassed in recorded history. Despite the fact that human rights laws and institutions have flourished over the past century, abuses and suffering abound - so, crimes against humanity, torture, all sorts of repression, desperate poverty. They reflect a major gap - what I call the human rights gap - between international law and legal rhetoric, and the experience of millions of people around the world who are currently suffering human rights abuses and atrocities.

Because widespread human rights abuse and violations of the rule of law are a major cause of violent conflict, which in turn contributes to more atrocities and human rights abuses, I think it's essential that we make progress in these areas, in bridging this human rights gap, if we're ever going to make progress towards longer-term peace and stability.

I think, if we're going to make progress, again, we need to improve the world's ability to realize, enforce, and protect human rights. We must improve the process by which individuals can protect themselves and seek redress in systems for abuses that they face.

And this is where the promotion of the rule of law comes in. It's a critical link between human rights laws and the reality of their implementation. It's where protection of humans comes into play.

I think, the human rights gap is the widest - this is probably pretty obvious - in violent, unstable, and failed states. So, we have Iraq, Afghanistan, the Congo, Somalia, Sudan, Haiti, and the list goes on. These unstable states are violent and dangerous, making human rights protection extremely challenging - sometimes impossible.

After years of working in unstable environments, I continue to be shocked at what people are willing to do to each other, and even more so at how easy it is to get away with it. So, to say the least, we have a lot of work to do.

And moving on to my own experiences, I have been involved in human rights work for about a decade, from my epiphany in the midst of the violence of the Palestinian Intifada to, more recently, being the senior rule-of-law director in Baghdad Palestinian Intifada - I was in Iraq for two years and came back and worked in the secretary's office for Iraq at the State Department in Washington, DC.

But I think, in many ways, my year in Afghanistan perhaps best captures what I believe the practice of human rights law is all about, and I think it paints a stark picture of the difference that human rights lawyers can make. So, I'll go into a little bit more detail of that.

My service in Afghanistan did not begin on a whim, and it wasn't exactly what I imagined when I sat here at the law school taking notes on torts and secured transactions.

Having said that, the seeds of the human rights lawyer that I would become were planted before I even thought of going to law school. It was a trip to the West Bank in Gaza in my early 20s that fundamentally changed how I viewed the world. I won't go into the details too much, but suffice it to say it was the first time I actually saw violence and injustice up-close.
So I saw, very up-close, nonviolent protests turn deadly. I saw collective punishment. I saw daily humiliation. I saw very deeply embedded anger and fear on the faces of both sides of the conflict. And I saw thousands of malnourished children. So, the full spectrum. For me, it's a full spectrum, human rights, from economic all the way to civil and political. And that's an area that touches every single one of those.

I walked away from this experience knowing for sure that I wanted to do human rights work, and in particular that I wanted to be a human rights lawyer.

Now, there's actually, also, another force that shaped my desire to be a human rights lawyer, and that is that I had a mentor. In fact, it was a law professor here, who became both my mentor and my friend. Her name was Joan Fitzpatrick.

I don't think any of you know her. Professor Fitzpatrick was an extraordinary scholar and teacher, who took me under her wing while I was here and taught me not only substantive human rights and international criminal law, but also how to be a good lawyer, how to be a good human rights lawyer, in this sort of underdeveloped, hard-to-enforce body of the law.

So, many of you know, Joan Fitzpatrick died in the spring of 2003, while I was in Afghanistan, and she probably had more impact on my professional development than anyone before and anyone since. Her intense commitment to human rights and refugees helped to actually change the face of the international legal order around these issues.

Joan and I spoke regularly while we were in Afghanistan, and she spent a lot of time trying to talk me down off the ledge - many conversations convincing me that I was actually doing something positive and that it made a difference.

So, after law school, again, I went and I practiced law at White and Case. And that was a long three years where, again, I learned a lot, but probably spent the last year looking for a human rights position in the field, knowing, again, for sure, that I wanted to go work in the field.

So, in 2002, I accepted a post in Afghanistan with the United Nations, western Afghanistan. It was with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. But, I did primarily sort of bread-and-butter human rights work; also dealt with a lot of displaced people, but more IDPs, internally displaced people.

As you can imagine, although I approached these new responsibilities with enthusiasm, I also recognized that it was not without its hardship. So, my salary dropped to about a quarter of what it was at the law firm. I moved from a house in suburban Washington, a four-bedroom colonial house, to a single room in a UN guest house with sporadic water, toxic kerosene heaters in the winter, and really bad food, actually. So, it was quite a switch, and I was more than happy to do it. I was extremely excited.

And after arriving in Afghanistan, I quickly found out that the Afghan people are an amazing, beautiful... Afghanistan is an amazing, beautiful country with very strong, independent people who've learned to function and survive over 30 years of conflict.

Has anyone here been to Afghanistan? OK. Then I can say anything I want about it. [laughs]

They're a very proud people, living within a complex web of cultural and religious traditions and norms. And they are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, which is obvious.

That said, the country was rife with human rights issues. So, there was violence and torture. There
were child brides. There were abused women. There was no predictable safety or security for the people. There was no formal legal system or laws. People tended to turn to their informal local systems - sometimes very tribal, sometimes sort of semi-formalized in what they call Jurgas, often drawing upon Sharia law.

But, most importantly, most Afghan people were also destitute. At the time, their poverty level and living conditions were extremely poor.

This was also not a country where you could really walk in with a copy of the Convention on Civil and Political Rights and say, "OK, people, let's get moving." Instead, in order to actually even make a dent in the human rights situation and issues there, it was a very long, complex process, figuring out what could be accomplished given the culture and the conditions. And even more difficult, I had to figure out how to do it.

So, in all of this, I recognized that human rights law, like politics, is the art of the possible.

So, we all tried to basically eat the elephant one bite at a time. In my case, I trained human rights NGOs, human rights trainings for Afghan government officials, village leaders, teaching them what rights looked like in their daily lives, which was both humorous, and frustrating, and deeply humbling.

On a number of occasions, I found myself standing in front of large groups of men, hardened Afghan men in turbans. I would be standing in front of the room, basically, they were first required to be there in order to get food assistance. And this was an ICRC and UN requirement. So, it wasn't my charismatic teaching style that attracted them.

I would stand in front of the room as they stared at me, bewildered, as I tried to explain why they should not sell their daughters to get money to feed their family. Why torture may not be a good form of punishment. Why honor killings are wrong.

I once sat in a mud house with a Mullah. Hundreds of people in his village had recently been killed and/or maimed for revenge killings. It's some ethnic conflict that was going on while I was there. He was clearly very uncomfortable being in my presence, which is understandable. He was not used to seeing women's faces.

And I, too, was uncomfortable. I knew I was pushing a cultural boundary. I wore a head scarf rather than a burkah. At the same time that I wanted to respect him and his culture, I also had certain limits and was only willing to go so far in adopting local tradition.

Also, while I was there, I set up human rights protection systems in the IDP camps. I conducted interventions and investigations into actual ongoing human rights abuses and events. It was a complex process that required persistence, a lot of patience, and a lot of understanding - and understanding even of the people that were responsible for the abuses.

But, the project I probably enjoyed the most was a study on women and girls throughout western Afghanistan. And I was basically sent to the most remote areas of western Afghanistan, to meet with women and girls and basically try to determine, from a rights perspective, what their conditions were, what their life was like, and then try to determine, from a rights perspective, what the international community might be able to do for them, which was often mostly just getting them food, and getting them basic requirements just to stay alive.

And these women shared incredible things with me. They shared things about the challenges they faced just in surviving and in trying to take care of their families. I met eight and nine year old child
rides, and a huge number of 12 year old pregnant girls. At that time, it was... some of the families, the only way they had to make money was by selling their daughters. And it was not unusual, no eyebrows were raised, it just was.

In my year in Afghanistan, I learned the true complexities inherent in advancing human rights in violent and poor environments. I saw firsthand that poverty and destitution will almost always trump human rights. When families are concerned only about surviving and eating one meal a day, they might do things that offend our sense of moral purpose, like selling their daughters to much older men for marriage.

It was clear to me that a multidisciplinary solution that addresses security, justice and well being, these solutions are key in realizing the objectives in these environments, particularly when it comes to human rights.

So, despite these challenges, I was able to use my legal skills every day. It was my understanding of human rights law and legal reasoning that served as my foundation. It allowed me to focus on implementable solutions, and helped me to boil complex concepts and ideas down into simple actions that local people and governments could actually use.

I used the law and legal drafting skills to convince the local government to release a group of girls being held against their will in a government guest house for abusive purposes. I used my understanding of refugee and human rights law as well as all of my legal skills daily to analyze problems and come up with solutions.

So, I know I said I'd speak about Iraq too. And, I'm guessing some of you might be interested in that. We're probably going to have to save more of that for the question and answer period. I can tell you that there was no shortage of lawyers involved in the lead up to Iraq, and in the reconstruction in Iraq.

We had lawyers justifying the reasons for going in. We had lawyers rewriting laws, lawyers setting up courts, lawyers doing just about anything that you can think of. But, there was definitely a shortage of human rights lawyers. And I think this had consequences for our country, for principles of international rule of law, for soldiers, and more importantly, for the Iraqi people. So, again, I can answer more questions on Iraq, but for now, that's all I'm going to say on Iraq.

My experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan underscored my professional and personal commitment to the practice of human rights law. These experiences also underscored four qualities and requirements that I believe form the foundation for successful practice of human rights law in almost any environment, particularly difficult environments.

With your indulgence, let me just lay these out for your consideration. First, I think successful human rights lawyers must be experts across a wide range of legal regimes, laws, and practices - both US and international. Legal expertise, I think, is the ticket to ride. And you have to prove over and over that you know the law.

But, knowledge of the law alone is not sufficient. Equally important, you have to understand the environments in which you are applying the law. And remember that the practice of human rights law is an intensely personal experience. You have to carefully tailor your programs, your methodologies and your messages so that they resonate with the people and the cultures that you're trying to shape.

Lecturing does very little to build enduring human rights. So, you must know your audience, and
you have to know their environments. The practice of human rights law is sort of like the legal equivalent of meatball surgery. You have to adapt your skills to the environment that you're working in. You have to apply both a deep knowledge as well as intellectual agility in finding solutions and it takes all of that in order to have your messages take root and grow.

Second, I think we need to maintain our lofty and idealistic objectives and motivations. Your work will be frustrating in many ways, taking two steps backward sometimes for every step forward. In my work in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I regularly questioned my motives, as well as those of the international community. And I think that sort of introspection is very important, but you must never let that introspection slide into cynicism, which is very difficult particularly when you've viewing these things face to face on the ground.

I think, you'll get discouraged and that much is certain. I sometimes found myself in situations knowing for sure that I was not having the impact that I intended to have. But, also wandering what actual impact I was having.

Hoping that I was at a minimum not doing harm, but I figure idealism is your shield and it is our foundation for the strength that we bring to these situations. And it helps me to always remember and I think for you to always remember this fundamental truth, which is you can, when you approach these environments, you can and you will make a difference.

Third - You have to be committed and seriously committed so there are no half measures in the practice of human rights law. By its very definition you will have very few friends in the environment in which you will work.

You will always be pushing up hill against traditions, against personalities, against comfort zones, sometimes against the International Community and the tendencies of countries and multilateral organizations to not want to take action or to not be able to take action.

And it's often again pushing up against very profound and heartbreaking brutality. In the face of these obstacles you must stay the course. And pick yourself up when you're knocked down, dust yourself off, and try again.

Human Rights lawyers do not routinely serve in Paris or London. We tend to work in Baghdad and Kabul, Kinshasa, Lagos, and other garden spots. You'll find yourselves living and working in austere and dismal environments, and you'll find yourselves working and living among some of the most noble men and women that you have ever worked with.

These are men and women who reflect probably the best of the human species. I'm referring not to your co-workers and the people you work with but also the communities that you are trying to shape. These are communities that often teach you more than they learn from you.

So, it's a world of paradox and I think you need to be unequivocally committed if you're going to succeed.

Fourth - You must be tenacious. Human Rights Improvements do not happen over night. While those all male audiences that I taught in Afghanistan showed up so that they could eat and so that their families could eat. Eventually some of the messages that we conveyed began to take root and thrive in some of their villages.

As I mentioned Human Rights Laws is not a business for dilatants or for weekend warriors. It's a messy, squishy area of the law filled with set backs, but through all of these qualities through tenacity and persistence and patience you can make a difference and you do and will make a
difference.

And it's measured in the advance of human rights on a community scale, on a global scale. You're contributing to what actually is a movement and it's a human rights movement that has made a lot of progress.

So, I just listen to myself and I can imagine that you're asking - if any of you were interested in doing this in the first place, even more now why would you do this. Why would you do this work, put yourself through the discomfort the physical dangers, the physical or the frustrations, professional frustrations. Some of you might be thinking why would you want to take such a pay cut.

And I can speak with some certainty because I have asked myself these questions, although rarely did I actually take any of them that seriously because I have always been sure.

Since for over a decade that I was doing what I needed to be doing what I wanted to be doing and I feel lucky in that. I think, it is rare that people actually identify what they're passionate about and then actually end up doing it so I feel very fortunate in that sense.

And again these questions again fortunately I had a mentor who could answer a lot of these questions and basically inspired me to serve this greater cause. Profession Joan Fitzpatrick was a walking, breathing, living embodiment of the nobility of Human Rights Law.

Her intense commitment to human rights and refugees helped to change the face of the International Legal Order.

I remember at one point when I was in Afghanistan I wrote down something that she said. And I wrote it down because it was rare that I ever heard her go from her very intense analytical mind set and step into the world and language of idealism.

She said, "Karen, Human Rights work is hard and it doesn't always work, but you just have to keep going, you just have to keep doing it you are part of something that is much bigger than yourself, and it is a movement that is bigger than both of us."

But, the laws are so weak, the institutions are so weak the people are not protected and it's up to you to figure out how to fix that.

So, two months later Professor Fitzpatrick died, but what she did for me and more importantly what she did for the practice of Human Rights Law around the world will endure for many generations.

And that's what we're all here for tonight. I think that's for the heart and soul of Human Rights Law. I actually congratulate all of you, each of you, on what you've already achieved to be here. And let me just leave you with a final thought.

The practice of Human Rights Law in the field is not for everyone. It can be an incredibly dangerous experience, but it is also an incredibly rewarding experience. And I have found it even more rewarding than working at the policy level, working at the academic level. I've always had the most fun and had the most reward from working in the field.

And so I encourage you whether it's Human Rights Law or any other area to spend more time doing that. So, for those of you for whom this has an appeal the rewards and service in human rights can be immeasurably fulfilling.
As the US government and the International Community become increasingly aware of the inextricable relationship between security, economic development and human rights this field will continue to expand in both investments and opportunities.

Opportunities for all of you, and just to underscore this point in order for this human rights movement to continue and to grow and to advance we need desperately more and better human rights lawyers.

So, regardless where your education and practice leads you I wish you the best. Thank you.

[applause]

Karen: I should have looked at the clock. I thought we were only about twenty minutes. [pause]

Audience Member: I was just curious what is this would be an appropriate... [pause]

crosstalk

Karen: If you could just repeat the question a little bit louder... Let me... I can do it since I'm the one with the microphone. Basically, you're asking whether you and HCR International and perhaps also National Refugee legal regime design laws should add an economic reason in their status analyses for asylum. I don't necessarily think this time is better than any other time. I think, it is a good... I think, with that issue there is immense difficulty in implementation. Economic justice, you know the arguments on both sides and there are a huge number, millions of people in the world who are migrating and moving for economic reasons.

So, to turn it into a reason for asylum, again, we would have to have very strict and specific conditions that differentiate some people from others. So, I would find danger in that in ranking economic justice issues. But, I do see your point and I think that as it is being discussed in a lot of forums, I think it's an important issue to keep on the agenda.

Audience Member: I have a question about sporadic and... [off-mic question]

Karen: For me this is a pretty clear issue. For others it may not be. I think, you can't separate the means from the end. I think besides the fact that that's sort of a degrading and what they're doing seems ridiculous, there are other ways and better ways to achieve their objectives. So, the military throughout Iraq is finding ways to do searches and seizures without engaging in that type of activity. And actually there are much more difficult dilemmas that human rights lawyers and practitioners and others on the ground get involved in. I think on that most would find it a problem, both in treatment of the women they are auctioning off as well as how they are actually engaging with local Iraqis.

Does that answer your question? Not really. [laughs]

Audience Member: [off-mic question]

Karen: -huh. Well, and that's the foundation of my answer which is that I think the means.... You always have to consider the means. You cannot do anything just for the sake of the end. And yeah, it's an issue related to everything.... Just the whole fact that we went into Iraq and let's just say for argument fact that we did it for humanitarian reasons. Let's just say that. [laughs] If in the process we have destroyed a country and done it in such a way that thousands and thousands of people have died, there's a means and an ends issue there. So, go ahead.
Karen: So, this was my second job in Iraq. The first one I had was Senior Advisor on Human Rights, in terms of transitional justice. So, the second job I worked for the embassy. I worked for Ambassador Negroponte. He was the ambassador at the time. Before that there was no real rule of law program. There were some ad hoc efforts to work on the justice system, the set up, some courts, a court here and there... Sorry. There Iraqi hired tribunal to try Saddam Hussein. There were some ad hoc efforts that were really attached to US objectives related to prosecution and regime change.

But, there wasn't a general rule of law program that address things from the legal framework. And the judiciary and the justice system. So, what we did was convinced Jerry Broehmer to set aside some money to start a rule of law program. Jerry Broehmer was the head of CPA.

Audience Member: You mean Paul?

Karen: Paul. I'm sorry. [laughs] Sorry, I have a friend named Jerry Broehmer. And they ended up recruiting me to basically develop an integrated US government rule of law strategy and program, and then to oversee its implementation. So, what it means is that the primary focus of what a program like that should be is to work with locals, local professionals, local stakeholders to identify what sort of problems there are, what weaknesses there are in their systems and their legal framework, in their ability to achieve certain ends.

So, whether it is law and order, an accountable government, or human rights, fair justice, fair and equitable justice and to work with them to figure out whether they are able to do that. And if not, what are the gaps and how can we assist them to do that?

So, it's often about capacity building. Training sometimes there is infrastructure involved. I know in Iraqi courts a lot of the regional courts, this whole system has been neglected for so long that the infrastructure had broken down. Sometimes you had toilets overflowing into the courtroom, which was really just a little room in a little house.

You also had things like a lot of the courts were not owned by the governments. The buildings and the land was owned by private owners. So, you had a whole system of courts that were paying rent to private landowners. I'm barely scratching the surface here.

The one thing I want to point out and it's a significant thing for me, but I'm not sure it will be to you. That is, the relationship between rule of law and human rights. I was talking with someone else about this earlier. Some people use the terms interchangeably. Rule of law and human rights or in one sentence. And really they are different things. They are related. They are reinforcing, but they are different. And there are a lot of countries and people use the rule of law to do very oppressive things.

So, I believe that rule of law, any activity that we do under it, whether it is legal reform or building justice systems or training judges, it needs to be informed by human right content. And I think that is one of the critical pieces of a definition of rule of law that is not always present.

Audience Member: You mentioned that you started out in a firm... [off-mic question]

Karen: Well, I knew when I was going, when I went to White and Case I knew that I was going to do human rights work. It was just a matter of time. I think I felt a little bit of anxiety about not actually being able to ever do it, about getting stuck in a law firm. And to be honest, it does take a
little while. It takes diligence to actually do work in the field. I think it's easier now, actually. There are more opportunities. There are more programs. There are more places on earth that are demanding and in need of assistance. So, it was more how long was I willing to stay at the firm before I take the step. I always knew that I was ready but part of it, I also needed... I saved a lot of money to pay off a lot of school loans and that was helpful for me.

**Audience Member:** [off-mic question]

**Karen:** -hmm. Well, I think at this point, probably the best leverage point is, if you are in the US, it's at a policy level. So, until our policies are informed with a commitment to human rights and justice issues, it's harder to do stuff in the field. So, in terms of big leverage, an ability to make the difference, I think that's probably the level. It allows you to mobilize funding. It allows programs across the government, across NGOs. NGOs get funded, businesses get funded. It changes how we give money to the UN and other places. So, I think that's it.

Yes.

**Audience Member:** [off-mic question]

**Karen:** Yes, yeah. I think that time spent being a lawyer is invaluable. And you really learn how to be a lawyer when you are practicing law at a firm or in legal services or maybe with the government. You get a lot of skills and a lot of knowledge and a lot of confidence in your ability to use the law that, now only shows in your work, but there are people out there that really value that experience. I remember going to Afghanistan. U&HCR liked that I had practiced law at a big law firm. I think they would have liked the practice of law in other fields as well. While I was working at White and Case I did a lot of asylum cases. That was probably helpful, but overall they like the lawyers who know to use the law.

Yeah. Oh, I'm sorry.

**Audience Member:** It was my fault. I'm Peter Bessinger. I work for the Afghan Legal.... [off-mic question]

**Karen:** This is a really big and important question. And I think that what you are touching on spans the whole range of reasons for intervention. And what I would like to think is that economic sanctions pressure, third track diplomacy and other mechanisms could bring greater stability to more countries. It does work in some countries. I think in others, there needs to be some sort of intervention to protect people, for human protection. Now, there's a whole other question of who should do that - Peace keepers, should it be bilateral? Should it be NATO? The US? By Bilateral I mean an individual government.

That's a whole other question. But, I do know that I think these military interventions are going to be around for a while. I think that they have been happening for decades and they are going to continue. What we need to be better at and what they need to be better at is what happens next. It's how they do it and then what happens next.

So, what kind of space needs to be created for people to come in and do humanitarian work, human rights work, poverty alleviation, protection work? And I think that's... what role should military play in that? And I don't know how many of you know this but the US military is getting more and more involved in development work. And they call it stability operations.

So, a whole manual out and they have been doing it for years but what happened in Iraq and Afghanistan is it became clear to some people in the government that we, as a government, were
not quite equipped to do this type of post-conflict reconstruction by ourselves.

So, what you have on one side civilian agencies like state department and USAID that are under funded, under resourced, not enough people and cannot respond to a situation like Iraq and Afghanistan to the same level that the military can. And that became very evident in Iraq, in particular, in Iraq.

Then when you add Afghanistan, although I know it was the reverse, it's even worse. So, how do you get the voice of people, experts, development experts, human rights experts in there to balance what the military does? I'm answering your question in a broader way, but I do believe military interventions will be abroad. I do think that they are necessary sometimes for human protection.

Oh, wait, I forgot, I called on her. Thanks.

**Audience Member:** [off-mic question]

Karen: No. I understand your question. You know, there are different directions that you can head. And I'm actually, there are probably more than even I know at this point. But, I do know that there are a lot of human rights NGOs. A lot of them are based in DC, but not all of them. Some are attached to universities, some are not. The more time you can spend doing work for them the better off that you will be. I mean during law school, during the summers. The summer after my first year I worked at the International Human Rights Law Group and learned a lot about how you apply human rights law to specific situation although I did it from DC.

It also depends on what part of human rights you are interested in. There are internships available with international organizations. You can even do work with some companies that get funding from the US government or the EU or other places. So, the list is quite long and maybe I can talk with you later about more specifics.

What I do know is that if you want to do and you keep trying and you just keep picking up the phone and trying, you'll do it. You'll definitely do it. Yeah.

**Audience Member:** [off-mic question]

Karen: Well, again, it's one of those things that you have to feel out while you are on the ground in the situations you are in. So, in that case that's exactly what I was doing, which was balancing those two issues. It's very unlikely that I would go somewhere where I would end up wearing a burkah and to be honest most would not expect it of me. They already get that I am different and foreign and probably already corrupted in some way. But, working a lot in the Middle East, that's a really relevant question. One thing that does help is an ability on the side of people that I work with to understand that we are from the West and we are different. But, I think, having respect - there is a line that I guess it is different. I can imagine it would be different for everybody. There are just certain things you just know would be offensive to people and makes your work more difficult and it means very little to you as a person.

So, wearing a shirt that shows my arms is not important to me. So, I wouldn't do it. I can cover my head. I'm OK with that. And it's a very symbolic thing that they appreciate. So, it takes you a long way and costs very little, I think.

**Audience Member:** [off-mic question]

Karen: There are three more... Go ahead.
Karen: I work for a company called L-3. I'm an anomaly within the company. Two years ago I made a decision to step away from Iraq and step away from the public section for a while. So, I work for a company that does, they work primarily in the realm of... the groups that I work with work in the realm of international nation building. The reason that I'm different is that this company primarily does reform in the realm of security. Again, I have to say this. Not Blackwater, they don't provide security. They don't provide armed people. But, what they help do and this is so critical is reform security sectors. They help train police, build capacity of police, reform security institutions so police intelligence.

They work with militaries and again, it's legal reform to help with accountability. It's about security sector accountability. What is legislature's role in overseeing a security sector in a new democracy? How do you build a security force that is accountable and that functions under the constitutional system and the rule of law?

It goes back to this question of military interventions. It is about security. It is first and foremost, people need safety and security. Too often, we have security sectors that are responsible for most of the abuses. And so, until you actually reform the security sector, it's very difficult to achieve your objectives and more humanitarian...

So, I didn't answer your questions. What I do is I was brought on to help round out... they do security sector reform. I was brought on to help round that out into more of a comprehensive view of national security, and to help this company build capabilities that affect, not just security sector reform, but also political and governance side, the economic growth, health and well-being side.

And so, to get into international development, democracy and governance and do it from a strategic, corporate management level and then help them let it trickle down so that we can offer through the entire range from security to development services.

Karen: For the first part of your question, I don't know if it's changed my view on it but I do know that we need field work here in the US. Then, I think, it's essential and we need more.... Again, whether it's lawyers or others working in these sectors, we just need a lot more of it. And I know historically law schools and business schools and others haven't created a facilitating environment so that people can... professionals that are really good at what they do can go and do that. Whether it's pay, whether it's high tuition versus low pay, or other reasons, it doesn't work.

So, I think, it's hugely essential. I have just chosen for now to do things internationally.