



Private Law in Context Across Asia and North Africa

Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah
formerly Supreme Court of Pakistan

Muhammad Zubair Abbasi
Royal Holloway, University of London

**“The Supreme Court of Pakistan’s Ruling on
Women’s Right to Maintenance: Justice Shah
and Zubair Abbasi in Conversation”**

Monday, 15 December 2025 – 4:00 p.m. (CET)

The virtual lecture will be held as a video conference via Zoom.

Please register for the lecture using this [LINK](#)

Dr. Dörthe Engelcke



About the Speakers

Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah served as a Senior Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court. A leading voice in constitutional law, human rights, and gender equality, inter alia, he has pioneered reforms emphasizing efficiency, accessibility, and transparency in the justice system. Justice Shah resigned from the Supreme Court of Pakistan in November 2025, because “continuing to serve in a court deprived of its constitutional jurisdiction would amount to acquiescence in a constitutional wrong”. Albeit in line for the next Chief Justice of Pakistan, he was excluded through a controversial Constitutional Amendment altering the Supreme Court’s seniority structure whose constitutionality is still under judicial challenge.

Dr Muhammad Zubair Abbasi, Lecturer at Royal Holloway, University of London, is an academic lawyer with expertise in comparative law, Islamic law, family law, business law, and law and technology. His recent publications include *Family Laws in Pakistan* (Oxford University Press, 2024), *Democracy under God: Constitutions, Islam, and Human Rights in the Muslim World* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), and ‘Scaling Artificial Intelligence for Augmented Learning: Developing a Generative AI Evaluation Scale through a Case Study in Islamic Inheritance Law’ (2025) 3 *Journal of Digital Islamicate Research* 5-32.

About the Topic

The Supreme Court of Pakistan recently issued a landmark ruling on women’s right to maintenance, holding that the obligation to provide financial support arises unconditionally from the conclusion of a valid marriage and constitutes a binding legal duty. The Court observed that, in a patriarchal society where economic dependence often reinforces systemic injustice, the right to maintenance must be safeguarded as an essential constitutional, legal, and ethical entitlement. In their talk, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah—one of the judges who authored the ruling—and Zubair Abbasi, who served as *amicus curiae* in the case, examine the Court’s legal reasoning, its conception of justice, and the evolving role of academic expertise in judicial deliberations. They situate the decision within broader developments in Pakistani family law and highlight the Court’s notable openness to comparative scholarship and international perspectives. Drawing from their experience, they reflect on the role of academic experts in cases of public importance.