



**Call for Papers**  
**for a Special Section on**  
**“Recent Developments in**  
**Sri Lanka”**



Sri Lanka has a plural legal system that recognises certain aspects of *Sharia* law as Muslim law through a number of legislation since the colonial period. These laws mainly govern aspects of marriages and their incidental issues, intestate succession, and Muslims charitable trusts. At the same time, all Muslims, as citizens of Sri Lanka, are subject to all other general laws of the country. There is no compulsion that Muslims should always opt for Muslim law. Similarly, anyone who has faith in Islam is free to opt for the Muslim law if they so wish. Nevertheless, once a law is opted for, incidental issues arising from such obligations thereafter will be determined by that law.

As the Constitution of Sri Lanka recognizes all written and unwritten laws to prevail, regardless of their compatibility with the constitution, there is a long-standing debate as to the compatibility of current Muslim laws with international human rights norms—in particular, the right to equality. This issue has been highlighted on international platforms, where it has been claimed that by maintaining discriminatory personal laws, the State of Sri Lanka has failed to uphold its international commitment to protect the rights of women and children. Sri Lanka has made many attempts to amend the Muslim Marriages and Divorce Act 1951 (MMDA), including the Advisory Committee appointed by the Ministry of Justice, Sri Lanka, to propose reforms on Muslim Personal laws in Sri Lanka in 2020, whose report was submitted in 2023. However, the question remains as to whether this report, similar to other reports, will result in meaningful change.

Against this backdrop, protecting the rights of the Muslim minority in Sri Lanka, requires overcoming both normative and political challenges by reinstating the trust of the people towards the secondary rules of the legal system. The Sri Lankan Constitution upholds freedom



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of religion and the right to practice one's faith, granting Muslims in Sri Lanka the legitimate expectation that Muslim law will remain in effect. At the same time, the State has the responsibility to protect its citizens from discriminatory practices, regardless of religious or cultural practices. It is argued that changes to Muslim law are possible as many recommendations suggested by the committee do not contradict *sharia law* (normative challenges). However, to introduce such positive regulatory changes to Muslim law, certain political challenges must be addressed.

Amidst this context, the Manchester Journal of Transnational Islamic Law and Practice (MJTILP) will dedicate a special section in a forthcoming regular issue in 2025 to recent developments in Sri Lanka. Contributors are invited to submit short papers that offer insights, scholarship, and critical analysis on the following topics, but not limited to:

1. Normative and political challenges in adopting positive regulatory changes to Muslim law in Sri Lanka
2. Recognition and application of Islamic law as Muslim law in Sri Lanka and future challenges.
3. Key areas concerning reforms of Muslim Marriages and Divorce Act (MMDA): Age of marriage, women's rights, and divorce procedures.
4. Recognition of pre-nuptial agreements in Muslim law in Sri Lanka
5. Regulation of dowry, mahr, matrimonial properties and financial consequences in the event of divorce.
6. Recognition and practice of polygamy and challenges in a plural legal system
7. Procedural challenges of marriage, divorce, child guardianship and custody
8. The Quazi system and administration of justice concerning Muslim marriage, divorces and other matters connected thereto.
9. Application of Islamic inheritance law and challenges
10. The concept of Islamic Charitable trusts (wakf) system in Sri Lanka
11. Recognition of any other Islamic concepts in Sri Lanka, for instance, Islamic Finance.

## ***Guidelines:***

1. The length of the submitted paper should be between 2000 words (excluding abstract and footnotes), but not exceeding 2500 in any event. Manuscripts should be in Microsoft Word format, and double-spaced.
2. No more than two authors.
3. Submitted papers should examine specific legal, social cultural, economic, religious and political developments in Sri Lanka and their impact on the application of Muslim law, linking it with principles of Islamic law. Comparative approaches, such as the application of personal or regional laws within Sri Lanka or application of Islamic law in other countries, are encouraged. Descriptive papers that merely present the legal context are discouraged; constructive legal analysis is preferred.



4. An abstract of no more than 200 words should be included with all submissions, along with 3-5 key words.
5. Contributions must be original and not previously published elsewhere.
6. Submissions must comply with the standards and rules of MJTILP, including research ethics, style and citation.
7. The MJTILP primarily follows the OSCOLA 4<sup>th</sup> edition referencing style with slight modifications suited to specific citation requirements of the MJTILP. Please see the MJTILP author guidelines for further information on formatting the referencing style.
8. Contributions must be written in a scholarly style and academic English. Proofreading may be required by the Journal's editors if a paper is otherwise acceptable.

## *Structure of Submissions:*

All papers must be uniformly structured using the following headings:

### **I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

This section should cover the explanation of the previous position [of the legal, social, cultural, family, economic, religious, and political development or issue examined] addressing its strengths and weaknesses or impacts on society.

### **II. CHANGE AND UNDERLYING REASONS**

This section should explain the changes or development in question, discuss the rationale/ underlying reasons for the change or development, and examine if and how Islam, Islamic law and practice, principles or values have influenced that change.

### **III. IMPLICATIONS AND INSIGHTS**

This section should incorporate discussion of the implications of the change or development for society and identify gaps in the existing research and areas for further investigation. How the change or development is viewed from a comparative (religious and secular) lens and what transnational impacts it may produce for the contemporary understanding of Islam.

### **IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

#### *Submission and Deadline:*

All contributions corresponding to the **Call for Papers for a Special Section** on “**Recent Legal Developments in Sri Lanka**” should be submitted to the Guest Editor for this special section **Dr Ziyana Nazeemudeen**, [ziyanadeen@yahoo.com](mailto:ziyanadeen@yahoo.com) or [zd7@soas.ac.uk](mailto:zd7@soas.ac.uk)



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Final review of all contributions will be conducted by the Recent Legal Developments Editor **Dr Mohamad Janaby**, who can be contact for general enquiries on our Recent Legal Developments section via email: [mjjanaby@gmail.com](mailto:mjjanaby@gmail.com)

The Special Section on “Recent Legal Developments in Sir Lanka” will be published in our July 2025 Issue. All contribution should be submitted to **Dr Ziyana Nazeemudeen** at the latest by **30 March 2025**

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### About the Journal

*The MJTILP is independent of any state, school of fiqh, or institutional affiliation and has a diverse and global editorial board. It is indexed on Scopus and publish four times a year.*



### Aims of the Journal

The principal objectives of the Manchester Journal of Transnational Islamic Law & Practice (MJTILP) are to provide a vehicle for the consideration of transnational forms of Islamic law and practice. Transnationalism in Islamic law is taken broadly as communications and interactions linking Islamic thoughts, ideas, people, practices and institutions across nation-States and around the globe. In recent times, research in Islamic law has shaped narratives based on nation-States, demographics, diasporic communities, and ethnic origins instead of developing around a central core. Contemporary issues of Islamic law are increasingly linked to geographical locations and ethnic or parochial forms of religious beliefs and practices. Expressions like American, European, British, Asian and Arab Islam have widely gained acceptance.

Despite the growing importance of dialogue to develop shared understandings of issues facing Islamic law and proposing coordinated solutions, contemporary research and scholarship have not developed harmoniously and remain piecemeal and sporadic. Researchers and practitioners of Islamic law are drawn from a wide variety of subjects and come from various regions of the world but have insufficient institutional support for sharing information and comparing experiences. Innovation in various strands and paradigms of Islamic law and practice is stifled because there are limited spaces where evolutionary, collaborative and interdisciplinary discourses can take place. This, in turn, hampers the ability to build on past research and record best practices, negatively impacting a consistent and orderly development of the field. There is a need to constitute a world community of Islamic law scholars based on interactions and aspirations moving across linguistic, ethnic, geographical and political borders.



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The MJTILP is inspired by the need to fill these gaps. It provides a platform to legal and interdisciplinary scholars and researchers for critical and constructive commentaries, engagements and interactions on Islamic law and practice that are built upon configurations in contemporary contexts. It welcomes contributions that look comparatively at Islamic law and practice that apprise and inspire knowledge across national boundaries, whether enforced by a State or voluntarily practised by worldwide Muslim communities. We are equally interested in scholarships on encapsulated cultural worlds, diaspora, identity and citizenship that are embedded and circumscribed by religious ties. As it has been the practice of the Journal since its establishment in 2005, it also has a specific interest in issues relating to the practice of Muslim States in international law, international law issues that may concern Muslim countries, and all aspects of law and practice affecting Muslims globally.