

# Elections in South Asia

## Reception and Panel Discussions



**Monday, April 28**

**3.00-6.30pm**

**Institute for Public Knowledge**

**20 Cooper Square**

Free and open to the public

### **3.00-4.30 p. m: South Asia (2013-16)**

*Saadia Toor (The Significance of Pakistan's 2013 Elections)*

*Dina Siddiqi (Performing Democracy in Bangladesh in the Wake of Shahbagh)*

*Tim Aye-Hardy (Prospects for Democracy in Burma's 2015 elections)*

*Vasuki Nesiah (Interrupting Governance in Sri Lanka)*

*Kanchan Chandra (Moderator)*

4.30 - 5.00: Reception

### **5.00-6.30 p.m: India in 2014**

*Rob Jenkins (Patronage Politics in the 2014 Elections)*

*Jinee Lokaneeta (Shifting Discourses on Human Rights in the 2014 elections)*

*Vamsi Vakulabharanam (Indian Political Economy and the 2014 Elections)*

*Kanchan Chandra (Moderator)*

This event invites comment on the meaning and consequences of elections in South Asia. Parliamentary elections were recently concluded in Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, are ongoing in India, and will be held next year in Burma (Myanmar). Sri Lanka held momentous provincial elections in 2013-4, with presidential and parliamentary elections two years away.

## Speaker Bios (in alphabetical order)

**Tim Aye-Hardy** was born and raised in Burma (Myanmar), and grew up under multiple repressive military regimes. Tim actively participated during the 1988 student-led protests in Burma while he was attending Rangoon Art and Science University (RASU). Later, he was expelled from the university due to his involvement during the protests and he narrowly escaped multiple arrests and crackdowns by the Burma's military regime. Tim left Burma to the U.S. in 1989 after another brutal military coup took control of the country. He attended California Polytechnic University, Pomona and San Diego State Universities, and earned B.S. and M.S degrees in Computer Science in 1998 and 2007 respectively. Tim is an Inaugural Carl Wilkens Fellow with Genocide Intervention Network ([www.genocideintervention.net](http://www.genocideintervention.net)), Chairperson of the International Forum Planning Committee with the UNESCO Chair & Institute of Comparative Human Rights ([www.unescochair.uconn.edu](http://www.unescochair.uconn.edu)), Member of the Central Executive Committee and New York Coordinator for Citizen of Burma ([www.CitizenOfBurma.org](http://www.CitizenOfBurma.org)), and Co-founder of Myanmar Mobile Education Project ([www.myMEproject.org](http://www.myMEproject.org)).

**Kanchan Chandra**, Professor of Politics at NYU, works on questions of ethnicity, democracy, violence, clientelism, party politics and the politics of South Asia. She is lead author of *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2012), author of *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Headcounts in India* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) and of articles in several leading journals. Her work has been supported, most recently, by research grants from the National Science Foundation and the United States Institute of Peace, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioural Sciences at Stanford University, and the Russell Sage Foundation. She is currently working on a series of comparative questions related to democracy in South Asia, including changes in the structure of the state, the role of the private sector, the relationship between democracy and dynastic politics, the Maoist movements of India and Nepal, and the institutional “management” of ethnic differences.

**Rob Jenkins** is Professor of Political Science at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He has published widely on Indian politics, particularly on the political economy of policy reform, movements against corruption, and pro-poor governance. His publications include *Democratic Politics and Economic Reform in India* (Cambridge University Press, 2000); *Regional Reflections: Comparing Politics Across India's States* (Oxford University Press, 2004); *Reinventing Accountability: Making Democracy Work for Human Development* (Palgrave, 2005; coauthored with A.M. Goetz); and *Power, Policy and Protest: The Politics of India's Special Economic Zones* (Oxford University Press, 2014; co-edited with Loraine Kennedy & Partha Mukhopadhyay). Jenkins has also worked on post-conflict peacebuilding. He was the lead author of the *Report of the Secretary-General on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding* (S/2010/466), while serving as a consultant in the UN Secretariat during 2010, and is the author of *Peacebuilding: From Concept to Commission* (Routledge, 2013).

**Jinee Lokaneeta** is an Associate Professor in Political Science at Drew University, New Jersey. She is the author of *Transnational Torture: Law, Violence, and State Power in the United States and India*, New York: New York University Press, 2011 (Orient Blackswan, 2012). She has published in journals such as *Studies in Law, Politics and Society*; *Economic and Political*

*Weekly; Theory and Event; and Law, Culture, and Humanities*. She is the Book Review Editor of *Law and Society Review*. Her current work focuses on the impulse of liberal states to explore “scientific truth telling” techniques such as narco analysis (truth serum), brain scanning, and lie detectors. She is also studying the racial profiling of Muslims in the post-9/11 United States. She is a part of a multi-country study on torture prevention initiatives supported by the Association for the Prevention of Torture focusing on India. She can be reached at [jlokane@drew.edu](mailto:jlokane@drew.edu).

**Vasuki Nesiah** is Associate Professor of Practice at NYU, Gallatin. She is a legal scholar with a focus on public international law. Currently her main areas of research include the law and politics of international human rights and humanitarianism, with a particular focus on transitional justice. She is also co-editing a volume on legacies of the Bandung conference on critical traditions in international law. Her past publications have engaged with different dimensions of public international law, the international legal history of colonialism, international feminisms, the politics of memory and comparative constitutionalism. She teaches human rights, law and social theory and international legal studies at NYU

**Dina M Siddiqi** is an anthropologist and research consultant. Her current research interests focus on the intersections of transnational feminism, human rights discourse and Islam. Her publications, grounded in the study of Bangladesh, cover a broad spectrum: women workers in the garment industry, gender justice and non-state dispute resolution systems, and the cultural politics of nationalism. She is working on a book length manuscript entitled *Elusive Solidarities: Transnational Feminism at Work*. She is also co-editing a volume on *Contested Nationalisms and Citizenship in South Asia*. She is on the editorial board of Routledge’s Women in Asia Publication Series. She divides her time between the US and Bangladesh where she is Professor of Anthropology, BRAC University, Dhaka. She has worked for leading human rights organizations in Bangladesh including Ain o Salish Kendra (the Law and Mediation Centre), and Bangladesh Legal and Services Trust (BLAST). She has carried out research consultancies for UNDP, UNICEF, and NORAD, focusing primarily on programs related to gender justice and women’s rights. She is part of the Core Advisory Group of the South Asian Network of Gender Activists and Trainers (SANGAT), on the Steering Committee of SANAM (South Asian Network to Address Masculinities) and a member of the international network, the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR).

**Saadia Toor** is Associate Professor of Anthropology, Sociology and Social Work at the College of Staten Island. She is the author of *The State of Islam? Culture and Cold War Politics in Pakistan*, an analysis of Pakistani history through the lens of the politics of culture with a special emphasis on the role played by the Left. Her scholarship revolves around issues of culture, nationalism, gender/sexuality, state formation, and international political economy.

**Vamsi Vakulabharanam** is Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Hyderabad in India. Previously, he taught at the City University of New York between 2004 and 2008. He obtained his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2004. He is currently a grantee at the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET, NY) working on a project titled, 'Economic Development and Inequality: What Can the Asian Experience Teach Us?' He was also a Fellow of the India China Institute of the New School (NY) between 2008 and 2010. His recent research focuses on inequality in the contemporary Asian economies, including India and China.