Constance WILHELM-OLYMPIOU, PhD
Athens, Greece

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Female | 24/11/1987 | French and American citizenship

STATEMENT

Security, (counter)terrorism, and gender policy researcher and conflict analyst with 15 years of field, research, and project delivery experience across Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Libya, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and Europe. Managed teams of up to 250 staff on multi-million dollar programmes. Specialises in mixed-methods research, programme design, strategic monitoring and evaluation, and political negotiations research for governments and multilateral donors (EU, USAID, World Bank, Afghan Mission to the UN), alongside policy research for think tanks at NYU and Princeton University, ODI, and the OECD. **Awarded my PhD in May 2026 at King's College London on French legal and security responses to female IS returnees from Syria and Iraq**. Fluent in French and English; working knowledge of Spanish and Arabic.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Counterterrorism and P/CVE expert — May 2026 - Present

European Union (EU) Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation

- Expert for Thematic Panels on Management of Foreign Terrorist Fighters, Volunteers, and their Families; and on Local Dimension, Polarisation and Resilience, esp. impact of (counter-)terrorism on local communities and preventing minors' radicalisation
- Member since May 2023 of European Expert Network on Terrorism Issues (EENeT)

Doctoral Researcher in counterterrorism, gender, law, P/CVE — Sept 2020 – Present

King's College London, Department of War Studies — ***London, UK***

- Throughout course of research, gave media interviews, practitioner trainings, and presentations to: CNRS (French National Center for Scientific Research)/COSPRAD (Scientific Council on Radicalisation Processes, Prime Minister's Office) (Nov 2025); France Culture Radio (Sep 2025); European Consortium for Political Research (Dec 2024); École Nationale de la Magistrature (Dec 2024); ProMete French Academic Network (Mar 2024); Le Monde (May 2023 and June 2026), Libération (2026) and Counter Extremism Project (May 2023).

Consultant – Emergency Needs Assessment — Nov – Dec 2020

Concern Worldwide — ***Northeast Afghanistan***

- Assessed food security, livelihoods, WASH, shelter, education, and protection needs and M&E data in NE Afghanistan during COVID-19; delivered findings to Senior Management.

Project Manager — May 2018 – July 2020

Altai Consulting — ***Horn of Africa, Sahel/Lake Chad, Libya, Tunisia***

- Senior management of a 2-year EU Trust Fund for Migration (EUTF) monitoring and learning study across 13 countries in the Sahel/Lake Chad: designed methodologies and tools, line-managed 7 international consultants and national teams, managed budget, and conducted fieldwork and trainings.
- Led conflict analysis research for USAID OTI in Libya: in-depth qualitative and quantitative fieldwork covering militia/extremist group dynamics, governance, and socio-economic conditions across multiple cities; managed 8-person team; presented findings and policy recommendations to client.
- Managed EUTF Better Migration Management mid-term review (Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan); World Bank ethical carpet end-line survey (Afghanistan); IOM migration programme mapping (Burkina Faso); Expertise France legal migration report (Tunisia).

Food Security Consultant — May 2018

Danish Refugee Council (DRC) — ***Athens, Greece***

- Developed a KoboToolbox Food Security Assessment Questionnaire for Skaramangas refugee camp; delivered an inception report and Training of Trainers for DRC staff.

Project Manager
Jan – Nov 2017

Altai Consulting ***Kabul, Afghanistan***

- Led Third-Party Monitoring of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF, World Bank): designed survey tools and managed national teams evaluating primary education quality and girls' access, two nation-wide irrigation projects, and a joint GoA/World Bank/ UN forced displacement programme.
- Established strategic groundwork and inception report for a new mobility patterns database for IDPs and returnees; represented Altai to the World Bank, Government of Afghanistan, and UN agencies.

Programme Manager & Technical Coordinator
Apr – Dec 2016

ACTED ***Kabul, Afghanistan***

- As Technical Coordinator for Sustainable Development: Held technical and managerial oversight of ACTED's economic development, community resilience, microfinance, disaster risk reduction, vocational training, infrastructure, and agriculture programming.
- Managed a NORAD-funded $20M rural development and stabilisation project in northern Afghanistan with direct responsibility for 250+ programme staff across WASH, education, irrigation, and agriculture.
- Led donor relations and country-wide donor strategy; represented programme to NORAD, UN agencies, and the Government of Afghanistan. Oversaw programme implementation, budgets, reporting, and compliance.

Programme Manager / Acting Area Coordinator
Sept 2015 – Apr 2016

ACTED ***Al Hudaydah and Raymah Governorates, Yemen (from Amman, Jordan)***

- Remotely managed multiple USAID and EuropeAid-funded emergency relief, food security, and livelihoods projects with 40 staff on the ground; provided strategic and adaptive leadership in an active conflict context.
- Led monitoring of programme implementation, budget compliance, and logistics/procurement policies; represented programme to local and international actors.

Syria Humanitarian Programme Supervisor and Adviser
Nov 2014 – Sept 2015

Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) ***Beirut, Lebanon***

- Remotely managed a humanitarian programme in Syria (WASH rehabilitation, hygiene promotion, NFI distribution) implemented with Mercy Corps; addressed programme and partnership challenges and led financial and narrative reporting.
- Developed and implemented financial, HR, MEL, and procurement policies and systems for MECC; served as primary donor liaison; led all capacity-building and technical coaching for team members in Syria.

Peace and Conflict Adviser
June – Aug 2013

OECD – Governance for Peace and Development Unit ***Paris, France***

- Supported New Deal (g7+) implementation; contributed to project design for joint donor-partner risk assessments; finalised a report on gender and state-building.

Acting Head, Policy Outreach & Special Assistant to Director
Sep 2010 – Jul 2012

Center on International Cooperation, New York University ***NYC, USA***

- Policy research on global peace operations, rule of law/organised crime, political settlements, peacebuilding and state-building in fragile states, and Afghanistan in transition.
- Organised high-level conferences in Istanbul, Dubai, and New York for the Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process 2011–2013; drafted policy reports, grant proposals, and donor reporting; led new website and communications strategy.

Research Assistant (part-time)
June 2011 – July 2012

Humanitarian Outcomes ***NYC, USA***

- Contributed to ALNAP's 2012 State of the Humanitarian System Report: organisational mapping of the international humanitarian system and survey data collection & analysis.

Adviser and Assistant to the Ambassador of Afghanistan
June 2009 – May 2010

Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations ***NYC, USA***

- Drafted speeches and talking points, conducted research, and served as rapporteur for H.E. Dr. Zahir Tanin on rule of law, governance, conflict resolution, human rights, and refugees/IDPs.

Non-Resident Fellow and Research Associate
Apr – July 2010

Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, PSIA, Princeton University ***NJ, USA***

- Policy research on fragile and conflict-affected states, with a focus on Afghanistan.

Special Assistant to the Director
Jan – Apr 2010

Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, PSIA, Princeton University ***NJ, USA***

- Conference Administrator for the LISD Afghanistan Implementation Colloquium in Baden, Austria (February 2010), a track 1.5 private diplomacy conference; managed logistics, agenda, and outcome document; led a student support team of 20+ for 100+ ministerial-level participants.

Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) Researcher (part-time)
Oct 2007 – Sep 2008

Kempen Capital Management ***Edinburgh, UK***

- Conducted research on the sustainability practices, standards, and records of small, medium, and large-size companies to support the determination of whether they qualified for sustainable investment.

Research Assistant to the Director (part-time)
June 2007 – Jan 2010

Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, PSIA, Princeton University ***NJ, USA***

- Conference organiser and rapporteur for LISD Colloquia in Petersberg, Germany (September 2008) and Vaduz, Liechtenstein (July 2007): track 1.5 private diplomacy conferences on Afghanistan and Iran's Nuclear Programme. Policy research on fragile and conflict-affected states.

EDUCATION

Doctor of International Relations (Awarded May 2026)
Sept 2020 – May 2026

King's College London, Department of War Studies ***London, UK***

- Thesis: Between Politics and Law: Reckoning with French female IS returnees.
- Fully funded: ESRC/LISS-DTP. Supervisor: Professor Vivienne Jabri.
- Research domains: Counterterrorism, Gender, Law, Security, P/CVE.

Master of Arts, International Relations and Int'l Economics
Sept 2012 – June 2014

Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies ***Bologna/DC***

- Field of Study: Conflict Management, additional focus on International Law
- Thesis: Martyrdom in Revolt.
- Scholarship recipient. Supervisor: Professor I. William Zartman
- Selected Courses: Economic Migrants, Refugees & Human Security; Conflict Mediation & Dispute Resolution; Statistical Methods for Business & Economics; Patterns of Protest & Revolt; Strategy and Policy
- Research Experience: Field research trip to the Philippines, including Mindanao and Manila, led by Profs. I. William Zartman and Terrence Hopmann in January 2014, engaging with armed opposition, government, and military actors in contested areas; Research Assistant for Professor I. William Zartman from May–October 2014 for the 2019 book "How Negotiations End"

Bachelor of Arts with Distinction
Sept 2005 – June 2009

McGill University ***Montreal, CA***

- Field of Study: Double Major in Philosophy and Anthropology; Minor in Political Science

SKILLS

Languages: French & English (native); Spanish (B1); Arabic – Levantine (B1); Greek (Basic); Italian (Basic)
Digital skills: Strong command of MS Office Suite; High-level skill on NVivo, Kobocollect, ODK data collection and analysis tools

PUBLICATIONS

- Wilhelm-Olympiou, Constance (2026). "Between Politics and Law: Reckoning with French female IS returnees" [Doctoral Dissertation, Publication as thesis and as a book forthcoming]. King's College London.
- Wilhelm-Olympiou, Constance (2026). "The European Security Strategy is stalled; Europe's counter-terrorism strategy shows a way through". ODI Global.
- COSPRAD (2025). Étudier aujourd'hui les phénomènes des radicalisations violentes et les politiques de lutte: Synthèse. Conseil Scientifique sur les Processus de Radicalisation (COSPRAD), Premier Ministre, France.
- Wilhelm-Olympiou, Constance and Köse, Helin (2023). "Jugement des revenantes de Daesh en France : une période charnière". Le Caveat. (also available in English)
- Wilhelm, Constance (2021). "Peace in the time of Pandemic 2: A Clash of Rights and Security", Strife. King's College London Department of War Studies.
- Wilhelm, Constance (2021). "Peace in the time of Pandemic", Strife. King's College London, Department of War Studies.
- Wilhelm, Constance (2014). Martyrdom in Revolt [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. Johns Hopkins University.
- Wilhelm, Constance (2014). "Identity politics: the MNLF, the MILF, and what their differences mean for the transition". In Hopmann, P. Terrence & Zartman, I. William (Eds.), Mindanao: Understanding Conflict 2014 (pp. 27-38). Washington, D.C.: Johns Hopkins.
- Wilhelm, Constance (2014). "Responsibility to Protect: R2P Doesn't Work". SAIS Observer, 3/30/14.
- Taylor, Glyn, Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer, Katherine Haver, Paul Harvey, Kathryn Barber, Lisa Schreter, and Constance Wilhelm. The State of the Humanitarian System. London: ALNAP/ODI 2012
- Bruce Jones, Jake Sherman, Megan Gleason, and Constance Wilhelm (2011). "Recent Evolutions in Statebuilding: From Supporting Capacity-Building to Political Processes in Statebuilding" in Situations of Fragility and Conflict: Relevance for US Policies and Programs, USAID.

TEACHING & TRAININGS

- Wilhelm-Olympiou, Constance (11 December 2024). La prise en charge des retours de zone [judges training]. École Nationale de la Magistrature Training: Democratie et Terrorisme, Paris, France.
- Conference Co-Chair and Co-Organiser, "Protection and Justice in Times of Counter-Terrorism: Insights from the UK and France", 7-8 September 2023, King's College London.
- Guest lecturer (16 March 2023). Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, « L'action humanitaire en situation de crise », lecture on humanitarian action and operating in humanitarian crises, with a theoretical and practical component
- Guest lecturer (5 October 2022). University College Dublin, POL 42330 Research Design 2022, "Week 4: Comparative and Cross-National Research", lecture on conflict research, programme evaluation, and survey design
- Graduate Teaching Assistant at King's College London for Spring 2022 term, "Contemporary Security Issues"; nominated for King's Education Award 2022 in this role
- Conducted Training of Trainers for DRC staff for a food security tool in refugee camps in Greece, May 2018
- Personally trained local/national enumerator teams conducting field and policy research via key informant interviews and phone and in-person surveys in:
  - Libya for USAID OTI on in-depth qualitative and quantitative research covering local conflict (militia/extremist group), governance and state trust, political, and socio-economic dynamics in multiple cities across the country (2019-2020)
  - Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, Senegal, the Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso on EU migration programming with returned migrants, including in vulnerable personal situations (2018-2019)
  - Afghanistan on World Bank programming for access to/quality of girls' education and on national irrigation projects (2017-2018)

MEDIA & PRESENTATIONS

- Feature interview in Libération (2026), "Dans le traitement des revenantes de l'État islamique, « la justice a longtemps fait preuve d'un biais de genre »". Libération.
- Featured in Seelow, Soren (2026), "Comment la justice française est devenue la plus sévère d'Europe pour juger les « revenantes » de l'organisation Etat islamique". Le Monde.

- Wilhelm-Olympiou, Constance (November 2025), Presentation for COSPRAD's (Conseil Scientifique sur les Processus de Radicalisation) Early Researchers Conference at the CNRS (Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique), Paris, France.
- Terrorisme : les femmes sont-elles justiciables comme les autres ?" Feature Interview on "Question du soir: l'Idée" (24 September 2025). France Culture.
- Wilhelm-Olympiou, Constance (19 December 2024). "Political Violence on Trial" [panel presentation]. European Consortium for Political Research's (ECPR) Online Seminar Series on Political Violence.
- Wilhelm-Olympiou, Constance (4 March 2024). "Les 'Revenantes' face à la justice" [panel presentation]. French Academic Network ProMete's Seminar on "Les sciences sociales et les réponses de la Justice face aux violences de masse".
- Featured in Seelow, Soren (10 April 2023), "Comment juger les « revenantes » de l'Etat islamique ? La justice antiterroriste aux prises avec les stéréotypes de genre". Le Monde.
- Featured in Seelow, Soren (10 April 2023), "Gestion des « revenantes » de Syrie : les exemples anglais et allemands". Le Monde.
- Featured in Michon, Esther (15 May 2023), "Etat islamique: Comment la justice française juge les « revenantes »". L'Heure du Monde (podcast).
- Panelist for Counter Extremism Project (CEP) Webinar "A Sisyphean Task? Prosecuting Returnees from Syria and Iraq in France", 2 May 2023.

ARTICLE & BOOK CONTRIBUTIONS

- Research Assistant for: I. William Zartman Ed. (2019). How Negotiations End: Negotiating Behavior in the Endgame. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, UK.
- New York University Center on International Cooperation (2014). China and the United States on the Afghanistan-Pakistan Region: An Analysis of Goals and Perspectives.
- OECD (2013). Gender and Statebuilding in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States, Conflict and Fragility, OECD Publishing.
- Wolfgang Danspeckgruber (2011). Self-Determination in Our Time: Reflections on Perception, Globalization and Change. From Schriften des Historischen Kollegs Herausgegeben von Lothar Gail Kolloquien 79, pp. 307-331.
- Liechtenstein Colloquium Report: Petersberg Papers on Afghanistan and the Region. Liechtenstein Institute on Self Determination, Princeton University. Petersberg, Germany, 2011.
- New York University Center on International Cooperation (2010). Globalization and Scarcity: Multilateralism for a world with limits.
- Afghanistan on the World Stage: Statements of H.E. Zahir Tanin, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the United Nations. New York: Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations, 2009
- Eds. Wolfgang Danspeckgruber and Robert Finn. Building State and Security in Afghanistan. Princeton University - Woodrow Wilson School. 2007.