

Georgetown Qatar Student Wins Andretta Fellowship to Study Pakistan Politics Post Imran Khan



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It took winning two major research fellowships for third-year student Minahil Mahmud Khan to hone in on her true research passion: documenting the evolving landscape of political resistance in her home country of Pakistan. Awarded the prestigious 2025 Andretta Fellowship through the Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service (CSJ) at Georgetown University in

Washington, DC, Minahil will be spending her summer examining shifting forms of civic engagement and political expression in post-2022 Pakistan.

This is the second award that the International Politics major has received through CSJ: last summer Minahil traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina, with an Education and Social Justice fellowship collaboratively offered with the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs.

While there, she delved into the complexities of interfaith dialogue, education, and peacebuilding in a society recovering from the Bosnian genocide of 1992-1995, giving her training in research methods and digital scholarship. “The Andretta Fellowship felt like the natural next step, offering more autonomy in defining my research topic and approach,” she said.

This summer, the Andretta Fellowship will take her back home, where she will research Pakistan’s political resistance and democratic participation in the aftermath of Imran Khan’s dismissal. “This is a topic I have been planning to pursue for over two years,” said Minahil, who has drawn from her studies in International Affairs to understand the context and importance of the research, which she will be pursuing under the guidance of Dr. Andria Wisler, Executive Director of the CSJ

With only one Andretta Fellowship awarded each year, Minahil is the first student from GU-Q to receive this award, an honor she doesn’t take lightly. Her research aims to contribute to the

scholarly understanding of political engagement and preserving democratic rights in Pakistan.

She will analyze how everyday Pakistanis understand and engage with their government today, from open confrontation and peaceful protest to more subtle forms of everyday resistance.

“I am struck by the extent to which the current government and establishment suppress dissent—and equally by the persistence of the Pakistani people in pushing back,” she said, explaining her calling to deeply study and document citizen engagement in the making of history for herself and those that come after her. “It is easy to dismiss political uprisings or democratic mobilization in Pakistan as futile, given the country’s long history of de facto military rule. But the nature and scale of grassroots political activity since 2022 is markedly different from before, as is the brutality of state repression.”

Following her fieldwork in Pakistan, Minahil will present her research at the Global Social Justice Research Symposium at Georgetown University in September, and adapt her findings into formats that meaningfully connect with the communities at the heart of her work. It is an exciting opportunity for Minahil, who hopes her contributions will contribute to the permanent historical record of her country. “It is imperative to document and engage with these moments,” she said.

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