

S-VE Graduate of Distinction

Shannon Mouillesseaux

Class of 1995



Shannon L. Mouillesseaux has nearly two decades of experience as a practitioner, researcher, writer and editor in the humanitarian field focusing on forced displacement - particularly the protection of asylum-seekers, refugees, internally-displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless individuals. For over a decade, she worked for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Africa, Asia and Europe.

While working in refugee camps, Shannon interviewed thousands of refugees and other displaced individuals, helping ensure their basic needs were met and their human rights respected. At UNHCR Headquarters in Switzerland, she was able to help write, edit and revise numerous UN publications, including policies, handbooks and guidance used by UN agencies and various national and international organizations.

Also while working for UNHCR, Shannon used her personal time to start iSurvived, the UN's first support and advocacy group for staff who have experienced PTSD and other forms of trauma while working in hardship locations, war and other challenging contexts. She has become an outspoken advocate for humanitarian staff well-being and is frequently contacted for related interviews by international journals (New York Times, Guardian, BBC), professors and students at universities in the United Kingdom and the United States, and has given recent talks at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, Syracuse University and Tompkins Cortland Community College as well as interviews for Harvard University, Cambridge University, Slate Magazine, and DevEx media platform for global development professionals. She also contributed to a recent publication by Tufts University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy on the subject of sexual violence against female humanitarian workers. Guidance she developed is used in master level coursework as well as UN and other humanitarian security trainings.

Although Shannon chose to leave the United Nations (UN) as staff in 2015, she has continued working as a consultant to UNHCR in Switzerland and to the UN in New York, and she currently works for an international NGO, the Near East Foundation, enabling her to be closer to her family while still focusing on her passion for humanitarian work and periodically working abroad in the Middle East, Africa and the Caucasus region.