

Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution



Vanda Felbab-Brown is a senior fellow in the Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings. She is the director of the Initiative on Nonstate Armed Actors. She is also the co-director of the Africa Security Initiative and the Brookings series on opioids: “The Opioid Crisis in America: Domestic and International Dimensions.

Previously, she was the co-director of the Brookings project, “Improving Global Drug Policy: Comparative Perspectives Beyond UNGASS 2016,” as well as of another Brookings project, “Reconstituting Local Orders.” Felbab-Brown is an expert on international and internal conflicts and nontraditional security threats, including insurgency, organized crime, urban violence, and illicit economies. Her fieldwork and research have covered, among others, Afghanistan, South Asia, Burma, Indonesia, the Andean region, Mexico, Morocco, Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Tanzania, Namibia, Niger, and Nigeria. She was a senior advisor to the congressionally-mandated Afghanistan Peace Process Study Group.

Felbab-Brown is the author of “The Extinction Market: Wildlife Trafficking and How to Counter It” (Hurst, 2018); “Narco Noir: Mexico’s Cartels, Cops, and Corruption” (The Brookings Institution Press, 2021, forthcoming); “Militants, Criminals, and Warlords: The Challenge of Local Governance in an Age of Disorder” (The Brookings Institution Press, 2018; co-authored with Shadi Hamid and Harold Trinkunas); “Aspiration and Ambivalence: Strategies and Realities of Counterinsurgency and State-Building in Afghanistan” (Brookings Institution Press, 2013); and “Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs” (Brookings Institution Press, 2010). She is also the author of numerous policy reports, academic articles, and opinion pieces. A frequent commentator in U.S. and international media, Felbab-Brown regularly provides congressional testimony on these issues and serves as an expert witness in court cases related to transnational crime and governance. She has also been the recipient of numerous awards in recognition of her scholarly and policy contributions.

Felbab-Brown received her doctorate in political science from MIT and her bachelor’s in government from Harvard University.

Dr. Felbab-Brown has not previously testified before the Commission.