



The United States Mission to the OSCE

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Felice D. Gaer

Chair of United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

Felice D. Gaer directs the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights of the American Jewish Committee, which conducts research and advocacy to strengthen international human rights protections and institutions.

Ms. Gaer is the first American to serve as an Independent Expert on the UN Committee against Torture. Nominated by the Clinton Administration and renominated by the Bush Administration, she has served on the Committee since 2000, including as Vice Chair (2004-2006), as General Rapporteur (2006-2008), and as year-round Rapporteur on Follow-up to Country Conclusions (2003 to present).

A member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Ms. Gaer serves on the advisory committee of Human Rights Watch/Europe and Central Asia and is Vice President of the International League for Human Rights. Encyclopedia Judaica describes Ms. Gaer as having "played the key role in assuring passage by consensus of the UN General Assembly's first-ever condemnation of anti-Semitism" in 1998, and being an "architect of many initiatives linking women's rights to human rights."

Ms. Gaer writes and lectures widely on U.S. and UN human rights policy, addressing issues including protecting civilians under threat, advancing the human rights of women, eradicating religious persecution abroad, resolving ethnic conflicts, and preventing genocide. One of the first to call for the issue of rape in armed conflicts to be addressed by the international war crimes tribunal on former Yugoslavia, she was a key negotiator on the U.S. delegation to the Beijing World Conference on Women. Most recently, her article "Echoes of the Future? Religious Repression as a Challenge to US Human Rights Policy" appears in the volume, *The Future of Human Rights: US Policy for a New Era*, published in April 2008 by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Ms. Gaer was a public member of nine U.S. delegations to UN human rights negotiations in the 1990s and has served on several OSCE delegations since then in her capacity as Chair and Vice Chair of the U.S. Commission. She serves on the board of the Andrei Sakharov Foundation, the Eleanor Roosevelt Center and the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute. In 2002 and 2003 she was cited in the annual Forward 50 list of Jewish Americans who are making a difference.

Ms. Gaer is a graduate of Wellesley College, from which she received the Alumni Achievement Award in 1995. She also received advanced degrees from Columbia University.

Ms. Gaer, who has served on the Commission since 2001, including two additional terms as Chair, three terms as Vice Chair, and one term on the Executive Committee, was appointed by Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).