

The United States Mission to the OSCE

Office of the Public Affairs Advisor

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Ms. ROBERTA COHEN -

Roberta Cohen is a specialist in human rights, humanitarian and refugee issues and a leading international expert on the subject of internally displaced persons.

She is a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Co-Director of its Project on Internal Displacement (a joint project with the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies), and Senior Adviser to the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons. Together with Francis M. Deng, she co-authored the first major study on internal displacement, *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement* (Brookings, 1998) and co-edited the second volume, *The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced* (Brookings, 1998). The two-volume study constitutes the first in-depth look at a problem affecting 20 to 25 million people in more than 40 countries and the first to develop a comprehensive international system for addressing it. In 2003, Cohen co-edited *The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Law of the South Caucasus: Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan* (American Society of International Law), and she has published more than 40 articles on internally displaced persons, including in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Forced Migration Review*, *Harvard International Review*, the *United Nations Chronicle* and other journals.

The Project on Internal Displacement, which she co-directs with Deng, works to promote more effective policies at the national, regional and international levels through research and publications; the development and promotion of international standards – the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement; the convening of regional workshops in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe; the integration of internal displacement into the programs and policies of UN agencies, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and non-state actors; and the undertaking of collaborative projects with local NGOs and research institutions in an effort to help build local capacities.

In 1998, Cohen served as a Public Member of the United States Delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights where she gave the US' first public statement on the issue of internal displacement. In 2002, she was awarded the DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired -- State Department) Fiftieth Anniversary Award for Exemplary Writing on Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy. The award was given for her attention to "multilateral humanitarian issues, particularly refugees and internally displaced persons," that is "non-traditional areas of concern for practitioners of diplomacy," which "have become markedly more salient in recent years."

Prior to joining the Brookings Institution in 1994, Cohen served as Senior Adviser to the Refugee Policy Group and the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Human Rights, and as a consultant to international organizations, governments and NGOs on humanitarian and human rights issues, including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank, the UN Development Program, and the World Health Organization. In 1993 she undertook a worldwide evaluation for UNHCR on the status of refugee women, travelling from Pakistan to Kenya to Nicaragua, and also participated in an evaluation of UN humanitarian action in the former Yugoslavia with the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies of Brown University. At the Refugee Policy Group, she developed a program to promote international attention to internally displaced persons, for the National Academy of Sciences, she developed projects to protect foreign scientists in Syria and China, for the World Bank she undertook a study on development perspectives for refugee and internally displaced women, and for the Government of Norway, she organized a conference on the protection of internally displaced persons. (Con't on page 2)

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From 1982-1988, she accompanied her husband on a series of overseas assignments for the Department of State in Ethiopia, London and Togo. In Ethiopia, she directed the public affairs office at the American Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where she received a USIA Superior Honor Award for reopening educational, cultural and media programs in difficult political circumstances. In Togo, she played a major role in the establishment of that country's first human rights commission and taught at a West African graduate institute. In London, she served as Honorary Secretary of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, House of Commons London, where she was chief operating officer of an all-party group in the British Parliament.

During the Carter Administration Cohen became Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Department of State's first human rights bureau where she participated in the formulation and implementation of US human rights policy, also served as Senior Adviser to the United States Delegation to the UN Commission on Human Rights and General Assembly, and as Human Rights Officer for International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations. From 1971 to 1978, Cohen was Executive Director of the International League for Human Rights in New York, the first US-based international human rights organization, where she played a major role in bringing international human rights issues to public attention and in pressing for the incorporation of human rights in US foreign policy.

Cohen is a Senior Fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute of the City University Graduate Center of New York, past Chair of the United Nations Association Task Force on Human Rights (Washington DC), and past Vice-Chair of the International Human Rights Law Group. Currently, she holds membership on board of directors/advisory committees of: Human Rights Watch/Africa, the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, the Washington College of Law Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, the US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, the Fund for Peace Regional Responses to Internal War, the Toda Institute, the International League for Human Rights, the RFK Memorial on Human Rights, and the Human Rights Program of Trinity College. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Women's Foreign Policy Group and the Fund for Peace Human Rights-Business Roundtable. She is on editorial advisory committees of the *Forced Migration Review* (Oxford), the *Journal of Refugee Studies* (Oxford), and the *Human Rights Tribune* (Canada). In 1994, she was the recipient of the UNA/National Capital Area Human Rights Award; in 1999, she was the subject of a special profile in the Barnard College Alumni Magazine. She is listed in *Who's Who of American Women* and *Who's Who in America*.

Cohen has spoken extensively before national and international audiences, including the UN General Assembly (Third Committee), the Commission on Human Rights, the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Community of West African States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe, has testified before the U.S. Congress, most recently before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) in 2003.

She is a graduate of Barnard College (New York) and received an M.A. with distinction from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (Washington DC and Bologna, Italy).