

Roberta Cohen

Roberta Cohen is a nonresident Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at The Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. She is a specialist in human rights, humanitarian, and refugee issues and a leading expert on the subject of internally displaced persons.



She co-founded and co-directed The Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement for over a decade and now serves as senior advisor to The Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement and as senior adviser to Walter Kälin, the Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons.

She co-authored the first major study on internal displacement, *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement* (Brookings, 1998) with Francis Deng, the first Representative of the Secretary-General and co-edited its second volume, *The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced* (Brookings, 1998). The study proposed the creation of an international system for addressing the needs of internally displaced persons. In 2005, she and Deng were co-winners of the Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order.

In 2003, she served as Public Member of the United States Delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and in 1998 as a Public Member of the United States Delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. She has served as a consultant to governments, the UNHCR, the World Bank, the National Academy of Sciences, and a variety of non-governmental organizations. During the Carter administration, she served as a deputy assistant secretary of state for human rights in the Department of State and as senior adviser to the U.S. Delegation to the UN Commission on Human Rights and General Assembly. In 1985, she received the United States Information Agency Superior Honor Award for reopening U.S. educational, cultural, and information programs in Ethiopia during a difficult political period. She has also served as Honorary Secretary of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group (United Kingdom) and as Executive Director of the International League for Human Rights (New York).

She has published about 100 articles on human rights and humanitarian issues and a series of op-eds in leading newspapers. 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, in particular on "refugees and internally displaced persons." In 2005, she received the Washington Academy of Sciences Award for Distinction in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. Most recently, Cohen is author of: "Iraq's Displaced: Where to Turn?" *American University International Law Review*, 2008; "Disaster Standards are Needed in Asia," Brookings

Northeast Asia Commentary, June 2008; "Humanitarian Imperatives are Transforming Sovereignty," *Northwestern Journal of International Affairs*, Winter 2008; "Darfur Debated," *Forced Migration Review* (Oxford: 2007); "Measuring Indonesia's Response to the Tsunami," *One Year After the Tsunami: Policy and Public Perceptions*, Asia Program Special Report, Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, 2006; "Developing an International System for Internally Displaced Persons," *International Studies Perspectives*, May 2006; "Last Stand in Sudan?" *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (co-author with William G. O'Neill), March/April 2006; and "Strengthening Protection of IDPs: The UN's Role," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Winter/Spring 2006.

Cohen is a Senior Associate at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration, past Vice-Chair of the International Human Rights Law Group (now Global Rights) and serves on the boards or advisory committees of various human rights and humanitarian organizations, including Human Rights Watch/Africa, the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, the Washington College of Law Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, and the Iraqi Women's Educational Institute. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Women's Foreign Policy Group. She is on the International Editorial Advisory Board of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* (Oxford).

She has an honorary doctorate from the University of Bern (Switzerland), an M.A. "with distinction" from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (Washington DC and Bologna, Italy) and a B.A. from Barnard College (Columbia University, New York), where she majored in History and minored in Government, and which awarded her its Distinguished Alumna Award in 2005.