

**Avner Shalev** ( Hebrew : אבנר שלו , born 1939)



Avner Shalev has been Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate since 1993. From the beginning of his tenure, Shalev has strived to redefine Holocaust remembrance and education, introducing a far-reaching multiyear redevelopment plan with the goal of preparing Yad Vashem to meet the challenges of Holocaust commemoration in the 21st century. To that end, he has put education at the forefront of Yad Vashem's activities by opening the International

School for Holocaust Studies, as well as enlarging Yad Vashem's archives and research facilities, and building a new Museum Complex. He is Chief Curator of the landmark Holocaust History Museum that opened in 2005, and of Yad Vashem's permanent exhibit in the Jewish Block at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which opened in 2013. He has lead the uploading of Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names onto the Internet, harnessing modern technology in the service of Holocaust remembrance and education.

In 2003, Shalev accepted the Israel Prize on behalf of Yad Vashem, in recognition of Yad Vashem's special contribution to State of Israel. In 2007, Shalev was awarded the Legion of Honor by French President Nicolas Sarkozy for his efforts on behalf of Holocaust awareness worldwide, and also accepted Spain's Prince of Asturias Award for Concord on behalf of Yad Vashem. In 2011 he received the Worthy of Jerusalem Award from the City of Jerusalem. In 2014 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Distinction by Israeli President Shimon Peres, for his outstanding contribution to the State of Israel and to humanity. In May 2015, Shalev received the Hebrew University's Rothberg Prize for Jewish Education for his endeavors to imbue fundamental Jewish-Zionist and universal values in Israeli and world consciousness.

Born in 1939 in Jerusalem, Shalev served in the Israel Defense Forces between 1956 and 1980, reaching the rank of brigadier general. Shalev was wounded in action on the Egyptian front during the Six-Day War. Between 1972 and 1974, including the Yom Kippur War, he served as bureau chief for IDF Chief of Staff David Elazar. His other military positions included: Head of the Information and Instruction Division of the General Staff; Chief Education Officer and Head of the Education Corps, and Senior Lecturer at the IDF National Security College.

After retiring from military service, Shalev served as Director General of the Culture Authority in the Ministry of Education and Culture, and Chairman of the National Culture and Art Council. In that capacity, Shalev instituted new standards for Israel's leading cultural bodies, and initiated programs - such as nationwide art, music and drama festivals - in order to increase cultural awareness and involvement. He has served on the boards of various Israeli national museums and cultural institutions. Shalev has played a key role in enhancing educational opportunities in Israel's peripheral regions by promoting the accreditation of local educational institutions and enabling their students to obtain certified degrees.

Shalev holds a B.A. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in modern history of the Middle East and geography, and graduated from the IDF Command and Staff College and National Security College. Among his publications are *To Bear Witness - Holocaust Remembrance at Yad Vashem* (2005) and *We Are Here – Holocaust Survivors in Israel*(2008).

<http://www.yadvashem.org/about/avner-shalev>