

Ambassador David Scheffer

David Scheffer was the first US Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues (1997-2001). He negotiated the establishment of five war crimes tribunals during the 1990s and continues to write and lecture about his life work on “atrocities crimes,” a term he coined and that is now commonly used to describe genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression. He led the US delegation negotiating the creation of the permanent International Criminal Court. His award-winning book, *All the Missing Souls: A Personal History of the War Crimes Tribunals* (Princeton, 2012), recounts the turbulent eight years of atrocities and tribunal-building during the Clinton Administration in which he worked. His latest book, *The Sit Room: In the Theater of War and Peace* (Oxford, 2019), takes the reader into the Situation Room of the White House, where Scheffer served on the Deputies Committee from 1993 to 1997, and the highly secret discussions, now declassified, that occurred there to end the Bosnian war.

Since 2006 Ambassador Scheffer has been the Mayer Brown/Robert A. Helman Professor of Law and Director of the Center for International Human Rights at Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law in Chicago, one of America’s leading law schools. He teaches courses on international criminal law and international human rights law. From 2012 to 2018, he also was the UN Secretary-General’s Special Expert on UN Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials. As a lead negotiator during his ambassadorial years to create the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia to prosecute the surviving senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge and those most responsible for atrocity crimes during the Pol Pot regime, his recent UN duties gave him the opportunity to raise tens of millions of dollars of voluntary government funds for the operation of that tribunal and to ensure the integrity of its judicial procedures.

Ambassador Scheffer’s career spans eight years with an international law firm, three years as a lawyer on the House Foreign Affairs Committee staff of Congress (during the Iran-Contra scandal), five years with Washington think tanks (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the U.S. Institute of Peace), four years as senior adviser and counsel to then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, four years as Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues during the second term of the Clinton Administration, and 1.5 years as senior vice president of the UN Association of the USA. He won the Berlin Prize of the American Academy in Berlin in 2013 and the Champion of Justice Award of the Center for Justice and Accountability in 2018. He has published prolifically since 1975 on international politics, national security, and international law.

Ambassador Scheffer was educated at Harvard College, Oxford University (where he was Knox Fellow), and Georgetown University Law Center. He was born and raised in Norman, Oklahoma, and during his life has traveled, studied, and worked throughout much of the world.