

QUESTIONNAIRE

A woman's right

After more than 15 years working to advance the status of women here and, more recently, being involved in promoting women's rights worldwide via her work at the UN, Ruth Halperin-Kaddari is one of the country's leading experts, activists and lobbyists for improving gender equality

Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, 44

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Place of Birth: Ramat Gan
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• RUTH EGLASH

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

A belief that what I'm doing, together with the people around me, is important for Israeli society, and for women in it, and an inner conviction that by that I am partaking in *tikun olam* – adding my small share in making the world a little better.

What keeps you up at night?

Sitting with my children in the kitchen around a midnight snack, never-ending e-mails that need to be answered and attempting to read just a few more pages in yet another never-finished book.

What's the most difficult professional moment you've faced so far?

Just recently, the adoption of the "concluding observations" of the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, of which I am a member, on the periodic Report of the State of Israel, in which I had a firsthand encounter with the dynamics of UN-Israel relations, and the manner in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict overshadows all other issues, to the detriment – in this particular example – of women in Israel, whether Jewish or non-Jewish.

Halperin-Kaddari believes in 'adding my small share in making the world a little better.'

(Osnat Krasnanski)

How do you celebrate your achievements?

By feeling good with myself and being embraced by friends and my children.

If you were prime minister, what's the first thing you would do?

Go back to all proposals made by the Arabs in recent years, including those known as the "Saudi proposal," and call for continuation of talks from the point where they've been left off (in light of the recent Al Jazeera exposures) – before it's too late. On the internal front – establishing a ministry for equality, and a national institute for human rights.

Which Israelis should have a movie made about them?

Shimon Peres, Aharon Barak, Alice Shalvi, Lea Shakdiel.

What would you change about Israelis if you could?

It'd be nice if Israelis were a little less loud, little more polite, with a milder degree of *hutzpa* – but then, I guess, they wouldn't be Israelis any longer.

iPad, Blackberry or pen and paper?

iPhone!

If you had to write an advertisement to entice tourists to come to Israel, what would it say?

Israel has it all – East and West, sacred and profane, rain and sun; sea, desert and mountains; why go all over the world when you can have it all in one small country?

The most serious problem facing the country is:

The Arab-Israeli conflict, together with all its inner social implications, leading – among other effects – to growing economic gaps and inequality on both sides that also feed extremist political views that in turn only serve to maintain the conflict; and the leadership crisis that only deepens the deadlock on all fronts.

How can it be solved?

If I knew, I'd present my candidacy for prime minister.

In 20 years, the country will be:

There are two opposite scenarios, both are equally plausible:

After several years of intensive negotiations, peace accords with all of Israel's neighboring countries have finally been reached, and 20 years from now they will already be getting a bit warmer.

And if not that, then I'm afraid that the most appropriate reference here is to Michael Chabon's fictitious novel [*The Yiddish Policemen's Union*] about Sitka, the land in Alaska that former Israelis received following the loss of Israel in 1948, will be relevant here.