

NINA SHEA BIO

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Nina Shea is a Senior Fellow of the Hudson Institute, where she directs the Center for Religious Freedom, an entity she founded in 1986. Ms. Shea has been a human rights lawyer for over 30 years. She works extensively for the advancement of individual religious freedom and other human rights in U.S. foreign policy as it confronts Islamist extremism, and other authoritarian regimes.

Beginning in 1999, she was appointed for seven terms by the U.S. House of Representatives to serve as a Commissioner on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. She was appointed as a U.S. delegate to the UN's main human rights body by both Republican and Democratic administrations.

A lawyer by training, she undertakes analysis and strategic advocacy regarding religious freedom as a component of U.S. foreign policy. During the Soviet era, Ms. Shea's first client before the United Nations was Soviet Nobel Peace Laureate Andrei Sakharov. She was a principal leader of the coalition for the International Religious Freedom Act (1998). She initiated the Executive Order on Advancing Religious Freedom, directing the prioritization of religious freedom in U.S. foreign policy, which was signed by President Trump on June 2, 2020, ignored by the Biden administration and remains in effect.

She has authored or co-authored three books on religious persecution, including *Silenced: How Apostasy & Blasphemy Codes Are Choking Freedom Worldwide*. She writes frequently in the *Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, and elsewhere.

She produced widely publicized reports on extremist indoctrination in Saudi textbooks, which led to comprehensive Saudi textbook reform. Her writings and advocacy on Iraq's Christian and Yazidi communities targeted by ISIS helped lead to official U.S. recognition of that genocide and the eventual end to USAID's policy of withholding aid to them. Ms. Shea's most recent study, in 2024, is *Ten Persecuted Catholic Bishops in China*. She has organized numerous webinars and conferences on the Chinese Communist Party's persecution of religious communities within China and transnationally.