



Law professor Gavison wins Israel Prize for legal research

By RON FRIEDMAN
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Selection committee hails ACRI founder for bravely grappling with issues of Israel's identity.

Photo by: Ariel Jerozolimski

Hebrew University law professor Ruth Gavison will be awarded this year's Israel Prize for legal research, according to a statement issued on Sunday by Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar.

Gavison, 66, a former Supreme Court justice candidate and the founder of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), was selected for the prize by a committee made up of Professors Ruth Lapidot, Yaffa Zilbershatz and Berachyahu Lifshitz.

In selecting Gavison for the prize, the committee said her research dealt with issues at the core of Israel's constitutional law and that her work grappled "exhaustively and courageously with forming Israel's identity as a Jewish and democratic state."

"Professor Gavison's work paves the way to facilitate coexistence between religious and secular Jews and between Jews and non-Jews," the committee added.

The committee also mentioned Gavison's research on the nature of the law and judicial restraint. Gavison is known for her opposition to judicial activism and it is believed that her disagreement on the matter with former Supreme Court president Aharon Barak cost her an appointment to the Supreme Court bench.

Gavison has participated in various public and state inquiry committees, most recently in the Winograd Committee, which looked into the failures of the Second Lebanon War.

In 2005 Gavison established the Metzilah Center, which aims to address the growing tendency among Israelis and Jews worldwide to question the legitimacy of Jewish nationalism and its compatibility with universal values.

Gavison has published eight books and dozens of academic articles, mostly dealing with human and civil rights and constitutional law.

In the past she has won the Zeltner Prize for Legal Research, the Bar Association Prize, the Jerusalem Tolerance Award and the EMET prize in Law.

Gavison will receive the Israel Prize in a formal ceremony on Independence Day.