

Expel Nazi, honoree urges

Holocaust group
lauds Klarsfeld and
McNulty.

By Bill Eager
Staff writer

ALBANY - The planned Middle East peace conference brings new opportunities to force Syria to expel the last major Nazi war criminal, Beate Klarsfeld believes.

In town Sunday to receive an award from the Latham group Holocaust Survivors & Friends, Klarsfeld said the United States and other countries should demand that Syrian President Hafez al-Assad extradite Alois Brunner so that he can be put on trial in Germany.

"We're hopeful that the United States will put very strong pressure on Assad," Klarsfeld said Sunday. "They have influence with Syria.

"We have to try and think it's a great moment. Now, with a peace conference, it's an excellent opportunity."

Klarsfeld and U.S. Rep. Michael R. McNulty, D-Green Island, were honored Sunday night by 160 people at Temple Israel for the efforts to bring Brunner to trial.

On Wednesday, McNulty hosted a luncheon in Klarsfeld's honor in Washington.

"We've never done this. We are very concerned with recognizing those people, that take action," said Shelly Shapiro, director of Holocaust Survivors & Friends.

"Congressman McNulty and Beate Klarsfeld have taken action to seek justice."

Klarsfeld, 52, and her husband, Serge, are world-renowned Nazi hunters, considered partly responsible for the arrest and conviction of Klaus Barbie.

Their efforts now are focused on Brunner.

Brunner is believed to be responsible for the deaths of more than 120,000 Jews during World War II while serving as an SS captain.

He worked in several countries, Klarsfeld said.

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Brunner has been convicted in absentia twice and sentenced to death in France.

Germany, Austria and the European Parliament also have asked for his extradition, and the case will be part of a November France-Germany summit, Klarsfeld said.

Klarsfeld and McNulty accused Assad of protecting Brunner, who lives in Damascus, and even with providing him with bodyguards.

Klarsfeld said Brunner is guaranteed protection because he helped Assad come to power.

"He's the last one of this importance," Klarsfeld said. "He was really involved in prosecution of the Jews, so really, he is one of the worst enemies of the Jewish people."

McNulty has introduced in Congress a resolution calling on President Bush to urge Assad to release Brunner.

In his acceptance speech Sunday evening, McNulty said that Syria should show its commitment to negotiating peace by extraditing Brunner to Germany to face justice for crimes against humanity.

Shapiro said all of the people in attendance made the commitment to press Syria directly starting today by bombarding the Syrian Embassy and Consulate to extradite Brunner "as a gesture of peace."



DOUBLE AWARD — At left, Rabbi Paul Silton and Shelly Shapiro, who is director of Holocaust Survivors & Friends, present the Latham-based group's Holocaust Memorial Awards to Nazi hunter Beate Klarsfeld and U.S. Rep. Michael McNulty, D-Green Island, Sunday at Temple Israel, Albany. photo by Tom LaPoint