

Raoul Wallenberg 2012

Implementing Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law – the Individual Responsibility

Concluding remarks

by

Ambassador Hans Corell

**Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights
and Humanitarian Law**

Lund University, 24 April 2012

Honourable Kofi Annan, Navi Pillay and Margot Wallström,
Mrs. Nina Lagergren and other members of the Wallenberg family,
Governor Tunhammar,
Vice Chancellor Eriksson,
Professor Modéer and Professor Pålsson
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Fellow students!

This manifestation in commemoration of the birth of Raoul Wallenberg one hundred years ago is now nearing its close. The event has been organised jointly by Lund University and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute. On behalf of the Institute, I would like to thank Vice Chancellor Per Eriksson of the University for good cooperation – as always, when we work together.

Let me also thank Professor Kjell Åke Modéer for addressing the topic *The Heritage of Raoul Wallenberg: Individual Responsibility and Human Rights*. We thought that this contribution would be an important element in placing this manifestation in its historical context. In particular, it is vital that the students, who for obvious reasons have not themselves experienced the events that occurred in the middle of the past century, know about a period that includes one of the darkest chapters in the history of humankind.

We are especially grateful to Kofi Annan for coming here to share his thoughts with us in spite of his extraordinarily busy schedule, the latest ingredient being his charge as the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League to Syria.

After his 10 years as the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his subsequent efforts in many fields, ranging from better global governance to global food and nutrition security, Kofi Annan has in a sense become a legend in his own lifetime.

In his address *Prevention, promotion and protection: our shared responsibility*, Kofi Annan said, among other things, that we should focus not on our successes but on our failures. Precisely! We have to do better! He also emphasised the role of individual action, which is what we are focusing on today – the individual responsibility!

But I would also like to highlight what Kofi Annan said about the United Nations Security Council. In my view, the failure of the Security Council to act with consequence and

determination is one of the greatest problems that we are facing in today's world. In my view, the Council holds the key to international peace and security, and a resolute action by the Council, using the same yardstick when such action is needed, would literally make a world of difference.

Our thanks also go to Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, for joining us to address the topic *Human rights: from rhetoric to reality*. The events that Raoul Wallenberg tried to prevent are those that, in a sense, form the point of departure for the rules that Navi Pillay is charged with implementing and supervising: the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1948 Convention against Genocide, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both from 1966, and a host of other treaties for the protection of human rights.

Navi Pillay's presentation points to the tremendous development that we have seen in this field, while at the same time it reminds us that so much remains to be done. One of the most encouraging elements in her address is that the Security Council has engaged in a more active dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Let us express the hope that this will translate into a more determined stance on the part of the Council to engage in conflict prevention. This would be the most effective way for the Council to fulfil its mandate without having to resort to the use of force as a last resource within the framework of the responsibility to protect.

We also thank Margot Wallström, newly appointed Chairman of the Board of Lund University, for her contribution. She brings with her the experience from her service as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. This phenomenon constitutes another dark chapter in the history of humankind. It still haunts us, and decisive counteraction is needed.

In her address *Conflict-related sexual violence: Another kind of war*, Margot Wallström emphasised that determined individuals hold the key to stopping violations of human rights. She said that we all have a choice when it comes to the principles of human rights: to act or to remain silent when they are being violated. Her message on how we must choose could not have been clearer.

There is a close relationship between this question and the overarching subject of empowerment of women. No doubt, the world would look different if women were allowed to participate in national and global governance on equal terms with men. I would like to emphasise this element with particular address to the men in the new generation present here today.

Professor Hans Pålsson, warm thanks also to you for your musical contribution. With your choice of music you struck a delicate balance between major and minor (mellan dur och moll) that characterises today's ceremony. On another occasion, I had the privilege of developing my thoughts on the connection between human rights and music, a language that can be understood by all.¹

¹ "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Opening Address – Music at Lake Siljan 28 June 1998.

Our manifestation here in Lund should also be seen as a contribution to the events that take place in many countries this year to remember Raoul Wallenberg's birth and his legacy. All this is just and fair.

However, on this occasion it is equally important that we include Raoul Wallenberg's family in our thoughts. I am thinking in particular of his sister Nina Lagergren who we are very glad to see among us today.

Nina is accompanied by her children Nane, Mi, Bengt and Astri and their families. When we think of Nina Lagergren, we should also remember her late husband Gunnar Lagergren, Marshal of the Realm and the first Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute.

When we planned this ceremony, we also discussed that a representative of the family could share some thoughts with us. In that interchange, Nina's daughter Nane sweetly pointed out that her husband Kofi Annan is also a member of the family in addition to all other things that he represents.

And of course! So it is! It is important that it is known to all present that there is this connection between Kofi and Nane Annan and Raoul Wallenberg.

On this occasion, I believe that it is vital to pause and reflect on the pain and suffering that Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance has caused his next of kin. Whenever humans gather to focus on Raoul Wallenberg's ideas and heroic efforts, for the family this has been accompanied with a mixture of hope, despair, anxiety and worry.

At a commemorative event in Stockholm in January this year Michael Wernstedt, who belongs to the grandchild generation of the Raoul Wallenberg family, shared the family's thoughts with us in a very eloquent and moving way. He spoke of the trauma that Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance has caused the family – also his generation. About the hope of Raoul Wallenberg being alive. About wanting to know. About the true hero. About the role model.

We should therefore also reflect on this aspect of Raoul Wallenberg's legacy. In so doing, we express our respect for what the family has gone through during all these years and our compassion for their suffering.

Sergei Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation – my friend, we interacted so many times in a constructive way during our parallel 10 years in New York, you as Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations and I as the Legal Counsel of the United Nations – may I use this moment to direct a personal plea to you. Please make a determined, genuine and thorough effort to establish the truth about Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance! After all these years it should be possible to disclose all details. It is not a matter of laying blame at anyone's feet. It is a matter of showing respect for the family.

When we close this ceremony it is, however, critical that we do so on a more uplifted note. And here I am thinking in particular of the students. It is important that students in their formative years study the deeds and the philosophy of men and women that stand out as models in history – in this particular case Raoul Wallenberg.

It is also imperative that students acquaint themselves with the work of such persons and their marks in history, as well as their traces in science. Lund University and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute have therefore agreed that it is essential to advance the scientific element in the areas of human rights and humanitarian law as a further contribution to today's manifestation.

This has led to contacts with donors who share the same interest. On behalf of Lund University and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, I am therefore both delighted and grateful to be in a position to make the following announcements.

We have contacted the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation seeking a donation for the purpose of financing a visiting professorship – the Raoul Wallenberg Chair of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law – at the Law faculty and the Institute over a certain period, and we hope that we will receive a donation for this purpose.

After contacts with the Law Firm Vinge and their offices in Gothenburg and Malmö, I am happy to announce that a three year framework agreement on co-operation between the Law Firm and the Institute has been signed and that Vinge will generously contribute to the operations of the Institute.

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute would also like to recognise and express our gratitude for a generous donation from Thomas and Lilianna Alexanderson which will enable the Institute to continue to award *The Martin Alexanderson Research Scholarship for Human Rights Studies* to someone planning to carry out, or who is actually carrying out, a study in the field of human rights, notably in respect of Roma populations or of anti-Semitism.

I would now like to recognise the presence of Anders Forkman representing the Vinge Law Firm. Your presence here today and your donation together with contributions from other donors make it possible for us to close this manifestation with satisfaction and gratitude.

My friends,

This brings us to the end of our manifestation to mark the centenary of the birth of Raoul Wallenberg. I cannot think of a more dignified way in which to close this ceremony than that we all bow our heads and observe a moment of silence to reflect on Raoul Wallenberg's legacy and, consequently, on our own responsibility as individuals.

[A moment of silence is observed.]

Gratias! Quod bonum, felix faustumque sit! Dixi!