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**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER
PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTION ON RAOUL WALLENBERG
30 NOVEMBER 1989**

I move:

That, noting (a) the continued international concern about the fate of Swedish diplomat, Raoul Wallenberg, who disappeared into Soviet hands in January 1945 following the defeat of Nazi forces in Budapest, and (b) recent discussions between Soviet authorities and Raoul Wallenberg's family about his fate, this House:

- (1) affirms its admiration for the selfless and heroic work of Raoul Wallenberg in saving the lives of tens of thousands of potential victims, both Jewish and non-Jewish, of Nazi terror during the Second World War;
- (2) urges all interested parties to continue to co-operate in a comprehensive and conclusive examination of the circumstances relating to the detention of Raoul Wallenberg by Soviet authorities from 1945 onwards; and
- (3) resolves through its own work on human rights issues, to continue to apply the universal principles of freedom, justice and humanity that so vividly manifest themselves in Raoul Wallenberg's work.

Mr Speaker,

Next January will mark the forty fifth anniversary of the date of Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance.

He was by all accounts a truly remarkable man.

His actions during the Second World War against appalling odds and possibly at the cost of his own life were simply heroic.

Raoul Wallenberg's example shows the power that lies within us all to rally in defiance and eventually to triumph over depravity and intolerance.

He personally saved the lives of tens of thousands of people who would otherwise have fallen victims to Nazi butchery: ordinary people - workers, mothers and grandmothers, school children - all marked for execution through the frightening and perverse twist of Hitler's call for a Final Solution.

But tragically, having survived and helped so many others to survive the Nazi occupation of Budapest, Raoul Wallenberg was himself swallowed up by the bloody creation of another dictator: lost into the clutches of Stalin's NKVD whence he was never to emerge.

Raoul Gustav Wallenberg was born on 4 August 1912 into a distinguished Swedish family.

After studying architecture in the United States he embarked on various commercial ventures, and through his business activities came to learn of developments in Nazi-occupied Europe.

By 1944, Allied leaders could no longer ignore the horrible fact of Hitler's Final Solution and tentative international moves were started to save Jews and other potential victims in Nazi-occupied territories from death camps.

President Roosevelt set up a War Refugee Board for precisely this purpose.

Attention focused on Hungary, which had at the start of the Second World War a Jewish population of 750,000.

Discussions took place between the War Refugee Board and the Swedish government to expand Swedish diplomatic and consular representation in Hungary to work to save human lives.

It was in these circumstances that Raoul Wallenberg was appointed to the Swedish Legation in Budapest.

In the period from his arrival in Budapest on 9 July 1944 to his disappearance at the hands of the Red Army on 17 January 1945, Raoul Wallenberg and his colleagues in the Swedish legation saved perhaps one hundred thousand people from certain death.

They did so through mustering every resource they had at their disposal; sheer energy, tact, determination, forgery, bluff, and bribery. Ever vigilant, ever present, they were ready to issue Swedish identity papers and passports to anyone under threat.

Joni Moser, who worked in running errands for Wallenberg, describes one incident when Wallenberg learned that eight hundred Jewish labour service men were being marched to the Gestapo concentration camp at Mauthausen.

Moser and Wallenberg drove to the Hungarian frontier and caught up with the column.

Wallenberg asked that those with Swedish protective passports should raise their hand.

On Wallenberg's order, Moser ran between the ranks, telling everyone to do so, whether they had a passport or not.

Moser explains:

"[Wallenberg] then claimed custody of all who raised their hands and such was his bearing that none of the Hungarian guards opposed him. The extraordinary thing was the absolutely convincing power of his behaviour"

In his work, Wallenberg was pitted against the ruthless killing machines of the Gestapo and the dreaded SS.

His antagonists included the infamous war criminal Adolf Eichmann.

At the very end of the Nazi occupation of Budapest, when he learned of Eichmann's plan for a total massacre of the 69,000 or so Jews who were still alive in the so-called General Ghetto, Wallenberg intervened in a final flourish of threats and brinkmanship to prevent the order being carried out.

When Soviet forces took control of Budapest some few days later, they found some 120,000 Jews who had survived the Final Solution - the only substantial Jewish community left in Europe.

Tragically, within a week, Wallenberg himself had disappeared.

He had devised a relief plan for the Hungarian Jewish community, and was on his way to present his ideas to Marshal Malinovsky, the Soviet commander, and the provisional Government.

His colleagues last saw him in the side-car of a Red Army motorcycle, on his way to discharge this mission.

What happened to Wallenberg after this still lacks satisfactory explanation.

There has been much speculation about Raoul Wallenberg's fate, with some - including, importantly, his family and his close colleague from Budapest days, Per Anger - believing that he may still be alive.

Soviet authorities, however, have maintained that Wallenberg died of a heart attack in 1947 at the NKVD's Lubyanka prison in Moscow.

Only last month, Raoul Wallenberg's family went to Moscow to get to the bottom of his disappearance.

They were given a small box containing his belongings - a blue passport embossed with the Swedish crown, some old currency notes and yellowed note pads - together with a reiteration of previous claims about his fate.

Sadly, despite the new openness and willingness on the part of the Soviet authorities to discuss the case, the examination of the circumstances relating to Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance is still not conclusive.

I for one believe that forty-five years after the disappearance of this remarkable man, efforts should continue to be made to clear up this matter once and for all.

But what then does Raoul Wallenberg's story mean for contemporary Australia, so far removed in time and distance?

In the first place, he and his colleagues from the Swedish Legation in Budapest saved the lives of many people who subsequently made their homes amongst us.

One such person was a 19-year old woman, Anna Boskovitz, who had recently married.

After being arrested in the middle of the day on the streets of Budapest for "looking Jewish", she found herself released from detention by the Hungarian fascists into the hands of a stranger from the Swedish legation.

That stranger extended her the protection of his Government, personified by this very passport I hold here today - protection that literally saved her life and allowed her subsequently to establish a new life in Australia.

Anna Boskovitz, who built a professional career in Sydney and who is now also a mother and grandmother, is with us here today, watching this debate from the Speaker's Gallery. Not only does Anna Boskovitz owe her life to Raoul Wallenberg, Australia is a better place for having her and many like her among us.

Mr Speaker, the story of Raoul Wallenberg also serves to remind us of humanity's capacity for cruelty on the one hand and its resources for compassion on the other.

In the words of one person who was saved by him, "Raoul Wallenberg symbolises the ideal that one person can make a difference".

At a time in human history when there is so much cause for optimism, so much evidence of change, Raoul Wallenberg's legacy demands that we not be complacent.

The violation of human rights internationally is still, sadly, a daily occurrence.

In too many countries we see daily evidence of suffering and oppression.

In many parts of the world we continue to witness unlawful detention, torture, starvation and poverty, the displacement of large groups of people and refugees.

It would be easy to turn our backs on these problems.

It could be as easy as flicking a television switch.

But to do so in the face of Raoul Wallenberg's example would be to betray the legacy he left us.

In the same Budapest that formed the backdrop for Raoul Wallenberg's heroism, we have this very year seen the determination of ordinary people to turn back the tide of totalitarianism.

And as in Budapest, so too in Warsaw and Berlin and Prague.

The universal principles of freedom, justice and humanity that so vividly manifest themselves in Raoul Wallenberg's work still fire the spirit of humanity today, just as the dark forces he worked to counter still have still to be eliminated.

Earlier this year, I was honoured to preside over a tree naming ceremony here in Parliament House in Raoul Wallenberg's honour.

I also paid homage to this remarkable man in July this year in Budapest, when I laid a wreath at a memorial erected to his memory by the people of Hungary.

Today, I am pleased to commend this motion to the House.