

2014



REGERINGSKANSLIET
Government Offices of Sweden

Speech
Stockholm 10 June 2014
Erik Ullenhag, Minister for Integration

Round table regarding islamophobia in Stockholm

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, thank you for coming to Stockholm and this round table regarding islamophobia. We need to fight islamophobia at the international level, the European level, the national level, the local level and in everyday life. And I'm very grateful that you have come all the way to Stockholm to share with us your expertise and your knowledge.

Malyum Salah Hashi. She is a woman who came from the war in Mogadishu, Somalia, to the peaceful town of Tomelilla in Sweden. But it was not as peaceful as one can imagine. Every day when Malyum picked up her daughter from preschool she passed a school where some young students, mostly boys, shouted awful things at her. During winter time, they started to throw snow. And when the snow disappeared they started to throw stones. Some stones hit Malyum. And some stones even hit her daughter.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Europe as well as in my own country Sweden far too many individuals face threats, violence and discrimination every day. Just because of intolerance from others. Muslims in Sweden and Europe are exposed to hatred, threats, discrimination and prejudice. Mosques are attacked and vandalized and many Muslims suffer from racism in everyday life. Women with veil are subjected to verbal attacks but sometimes also physical attacks. For example some people try to tear off their veil.

There is often a severely simplified and negative image that is spread about Muslims and Islam. This image has been strongly conveyed ever since the terrorist attacks in New York in 2001. Muslims are seen as a group, not as individuals. All people of Muslim background are considered to share the same culture and the same views. And far too often they are portrayed in a negative context.

And above all, it is populist, nationalist and xenophobic parties in Sweden and Europe that provide simplified messages of Muslims. Muslims are being held responsible for every social problem in society. Populists see Islam and Muslims as a threat. Myths are spread, especially online. One extreme theory is that Muslims move to Europe and give birth to a lot of children in order to take over Europe and to create a "Eurabia". Prejudices about Islam as a primitive religion and that Islam is impossible to combine with democracy flourishes.

These populist political parties are growing in several European countries and we are now facing them in the European Parliament. In some cases in Europe, these parties have been allowed to shift the entire political map. Established parties have adapted to the intolerant messages. Those who stand up for openness and tolerance have been far too quiet.

Also in Sweden we have a xenophobic party in the national parliament and soon also in the European Parliament. However, for the Swedish government it is clear - we will not let this party gain influence on politics in Sweden. We will not let them move the political map towards intolerance.

"Mum, why are they screaming at us? And why are they throwing stones at us?" It is the daughter of Malyum from Tomelilla. You know the women I told you about in the beginning. Her daughter is posing the question to her mum. What would I answer if it was my kids that posed the question? How would I try to explain the hatred from unknown people? I sincerely don't know. But I do know that we have a duty to fight islamophobia and other forms of intolerance. We must teach our children not to hate.

So what happened to Malyum and her daughter who were hit by stones? In the end Malyum got enough and went to the police. But even though Malyum could identify the boys who did it and even though the principal of the school knew who did it - the police did not investigate the situation. What kind of message is that? To Malyum and her daughter. To the boys throwing the stones. And to society as a whole. Society must react to this kind of hate crimes. The police, the schools and the parents.

The Swedish Government stands firm in its commitment to fight islamophobia and other forms of xenophobia and intolerance. Experience shows us that the fight for tolerance, openness and humanity must be a never-ending process. The work is never done and completed. Every day we must stand up for human rights and democracy. Every day we must promote an open and tolerant society.

The Swedish government have taken several initiatives to counter xenophobia and intolerance such as islamophobia. Some important areas are for example the educational system and the police but society as a whole is of course relevant. But we want to learn more from other countries. And with the results from the European election in mind, we believe it is important to raise and discuss this important issue on a European level. That is why we have invited you to this round table.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all have a role and a responsibility to fight islamophobia and intolerance of today. The greatest danger to a society is not the evil from the evil people. The greatest danger is when the good people are silent.
Thank you for coming to Stockholm!



IDAHO Forum 2014 - International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

Minister Dalli, your Excellencies, Delegates

Makumbi from Uganda, Eudy from South Africa, Dwayne from Jamaica, Anton from Russia, Håkan and Roy from Sweden. What do they have in common? They have all been victims of hate crimes, violence, prejudice and discrimination. The reason? Intolerance and lack of respect of the equal value and rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Makumbi, Eudy, Dwayne, Anton, Håkan and Roy - they are the reason for why we have gathered here in Valetta. We want to make a change. A change for LGBT-people. Let's work together to put an end to homophobia and transphobia.

All of you sitting here have an important role in this. All of you are in the forefront in the fight for human rights for all. All of you are strong and important human rights defenders. And all of you can make a difference. Together we can make a difference. A difference for people whose human rights are violated and denied in too many parts of the world. People who are arrested, beaten, and sometimes even killed. Because of what? Love? Not acting in a gender confirmative manner?

Delegates,

You have to excuse me but I have to state some obvious things.

Firstly, human rights are LGBT-rights and LGBT-rights are human rights. This has to be said since far too many still don't even recognise that LGBT-people have the same rights as every human being.

Secondly, being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender is not a western thing. LGBT-people are born in every culture, every religion and every country around the world. It is just a fact. Just like the fact that the sun goes up every day.

Why is something so plain and simple so difficult? Why is it dangerous to think that everyone must be able to live their lives in freedom irrespective of sexual orientation and gender identity? That everyone should be able to love whomever they want. That everyone should be able to show this love in public. And that everyone should be respected for who they are, irrespective of their gender identity and societies expectations.

However, in far too many countries LGBT-people experience discrimination, prejudice and violence. The violence often comes from fellow citizens. But authorities empowered to protect all individuals, far too often look the other way or are part of the suppression.

"And there are even those who doesn't stop by saying things. They hunt us. Have you heard about gay-safari? We have become hunted animals."

This is Anton from Russia who is telling his story to a Swedish magazine.

I have heard so many painful stories. But I, as a heterosexual middle-aged man, cannot fully understand. Understand how it feels. The discrimination, the prejudice, the harassment and violence. Every day.

One has to be impressed by the courage and braveness of so many LGBT-people. But we want you to know that you are not alone. People around the world are supporting you and we are doing our best to bring to an end the injustices and dangers that you face. We all know that some countries recently have adopted new and stronger laws against LGBT-people. Laws that clearly violate human rights. But our message is clear. Every government must protect and promote the human rights of all.

"It feels like we are threatened all time."

It is the words from Roy. He and his husband has been threatened, beaten and harrassed in the Swedish town where they live.

In Europe as well as in my own country Sweden far too many individuals face threats, violence and discrimination every day. Just because of intolerance from others. And there is still resistance to even discuss the full enjoyment of human rights for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people. Some countries put restrictions on the freedom of assembly, expression and association of LGBT-people and their organisations. Same sex couples and their children still have difficulties to fully make use of the freedom of movement within the EU. And the health situation, both physically and mentally, is alarming amongst too many LGBT-persons.

I'm worried about Europe and neighbouring countries. Instead of standing up for the human rights for all anti-LGBT-laws are adopted. Politicians and opinion moulders spread intolerant messages. Messages, which are against the principle of equality. Messages, which are a threat to our democracy and the respect for human rights of all.

In my own country Sweden we have made a journey the last decades. Borders and boundaries have been moved and sometimes crushed. We have a Discrimination Act covering both sexual orientation and gender identity. Homophobic and transphobic motives for crime are seen as aggravating circumstances. The Marriage Code is gender neutral and same sex couples can adopt children. And the Constitution stipulates that laws and other regulations may not result in disadvantages to any individual on the grounds of his or her sexual orientation.

Today these laws are not controversial in the Swedish society. But it has been a struggle. And every time we

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have changed a law there has been voices saying that the change will affect society in a negative way. Some even thought that the world would be put to an end. But we are still here. The world is still spinning around. It did not come to an end just because we said yes to love.

But we all know that legislation alone is not enough. We cannot be content when LGBT-people still suffer discrimination and violence in the Swedish society. Therefore the government has recently adopted a strategy with long-term efforts to promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. It is the first time a Swedish government has adopted such a strategy.

During last years IDAHO Forum, 11 EU member states supported a call for a comprehensive approach on LGBT issues. The call was directed at the European Commission. For EU members this call lives on. And this year we have more countries signing up.

But we are not staying at the EU level. This year we want to broaden the scope of commitment and focus on the national, European and international level. We hope that the Declaration of Intent will be signed by many countries. And we hope this meeting will encourage discussions and sharing of best practices.

It is the firm belief of the Swedish Government that we within Europe need to take all necessary measures to protect the human rights of LGBT-people. We need to prevent and to provide protection from all forms of violence and harassment related to sexual orientation and gender identity. We need to fight discrimination. And we need measures to improve education and information in order to encourage respect and diversity.

We also need strong political leaders who say no to intolerance and stand up for human rights for all. Political leaders who dare to make the necessary legal changes and who engages in the debate.

And here I would like to send my special thanks to minister Dalli. You have shown great political leadership and you have your vision very clear. A vision where all are equal and where LGBT-rights are human rights. It is not an understatement that Sweden and Malta used to be on different planets when it came to LGBT-issues. But minister Dalli, our countries are so much closer to each other now. It is still colder in Sweden than in Malta, but you are indeed giving Europe hope for the future. A Europe for all irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identity. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Malta for your hospitality and good cooperation in organising this event.

Delegates,

States have a duty to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all individuals without discrimination.

It is not a question of opinion. It is a question of state's responsibility under international law.

It is not a question of morals. It is just a question of human rights.

And yes, there are governments that do not share our views even in Europe. But there are many of us that do so. And I beg you to remember that each and every one of us has a role and a responsibility. We all must stand up against intolerance and to stand up for all fellow citizens. One person can make a difference. The greatest danger to a society is not the evil from the evil people. The greatest danger is when the good people are silent.

Last Saturday Europe got a new hero. In so many living rooms around Europe people listened to and voted for Conchita Wurtz. When she won her message was clear. "We stand united and we are unstoppable." Yes, Conchita is so right - if everyone who stands up for human rights stand together - we are unstoppable. Let the signal from this year's IDAHO be clear - together with Conchita and so many others - we unite. We unite for a Europe where everyone is respected for whom they are. We owe it to Makumbi, Eudy, Dwayne, Anton, Håkan and Roy. And we owe it to Conchita. And to our children. Let's take the fight for an open and tolerant Europe for all.

On behalf of the Swedish Government, I wish you all fruitful discussions and I hope you after this meeting will go home with more inspiration, more courage and more ideas on how to make Europe a better place for all.

Thank you



Speech

Preparatory meeting for IDAHO 2014 in Stockholm 09 April 2014

Erik Ullenhag, Minister for Integration

IDAHO Forum 2014 - International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (Preparatory meeting)

Minister Dalli, your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

It is an honour for me to welcome you all to Stockholm. And to welcome you to this preparatory meeting ahead of the IDAHO Forum 2014.

I would like to start by thanking minister Dalli and her colleagues for joining us and for our fruitful and good cooperation. I'm so pleased that our two countries have found so many common ideas and goals when it comes to LGBT-rights.

I also would like to thank the Netherlands for arranging last years IDAHO Forum and for starting this important process. This year, Sweden has the honor and pleasure to co-host the IDAHO Forum with Malta and as you all know it will take place in Valletta in May.

Let me start by stating the obvious. LGBT-rights are human rights. That everyone must be able to live their lives in freedom irrespective of sexual orientation and gender identity. That everyone should be able to love whom ever they want. That everyone should be able to show this love in public. That everyone should be respected for who they are, irrespective of their gender identity and societies expectations.

Unfortunately, this is far from a reality for LGBT-persons around the world. Too many countries have homophobic laws and attitudes. When we gather here we also send our thoughts to the brave people fighting for their rights in so many countries. We all know that some countries recently have adopted new and stronger laws against LGBT-people. Laws that clearly violate human rights. But our message is clear. Every government must protect and promote the human rights of all.

But also in Europe as well as in my own country Sweden far too many individuals face threats, violence and discrimination every day. Just because of intolerance from others. And there is still resistance to even discuss the full enjoyment of human rights for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people. Some countries put restrictions on the freedom of assembly, expression and association of LGBT-people and their organisations. Same sex couples and their children still do have difficulties to fully make use of the freedom of movement within the EU. And the health situation, both physically and mentally, is alarming amongst LGBT-persons.

This picture was confirmed by last years LGBT-report from the EU Fundamental Rights Agency. Surely you have heard and seen the figures showing the intolerance in black and white.

A quarter of all respondents had been attacked or threatened with violence in the previous five years. The same figure is even higher when it comes to transgender persons (34%). And far too many don't even report the violence and the attacks to the police.

Almost half of all respondents said that they had felt personally discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of sexual orientation in the past year. And 65 percent said that they don't dare to publicly hold hands with their partner. Just because of the prejudice of the surrounding.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I'm worried about Europe and neighbouring countries. AntiLGBT-laws are adopted. Politicians and opinion moulders spread intolerant messages. Messages, which are against the principle of equality. Messages, which are a threat to our democracy and the respect for human rights of all.

In my own country we have made a journey the last decades. Borders and boundaries have been moved and sometimes crushed. We have a Discrimination Act covering both sexual orientation and gender identity. Homophobic and transfobic motives for crime are seen as aggravating circumstances. The Marriage Code is gender neutral and same sex couples can adopt children. And the Constitution stipulates that laws and other regulations may not result in disadvantages to any individual on the grounds of his or her sexual orientation. And today this is not controversial in the Swedish society. But it has been a struggle. And every time we have changed a law there has been voices saying that the change will affect society in a negative way. Some even thought that the world would be put to an end. But we are still here. The world is still spinning around. It did not come to an end just because we said yes to love.

But legislation alone is not enough. We cannot be content when LGBT-people still suffer discrimination and violence in the Swedish society. Therefore the government has recently adopted a strategy with long-term efforts to promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. It is the first time a Swedish go-vernment has adopted such a strategy.

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LGBT issues. The call was directed at the European Commission. For EU members this call lives on. And this year we have more countries signing up.

But we are not staying at the EU level. This year we want to broaden the scope of commitment and focus on the national, European and international level. We hope that this preparatory meeting will enable us to achieve this by developing a Declaration of Intent for all committed countries in Europe to sign. But this meeting is also about encouraging discussions and sharing of best practices.

It is the firm belief of the Swedish Government that we within Europe need to take all necessary measures to protect the human rights of LGBT-people, to end impunity, to prevent and to provide protection from all forms of violence and harassment related to sexual orientation and gender identity. We need to fight discrimination and we need measures to improve education and information in order to encourage respect and diversity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

States have a duty to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all individuals without discrimination.

It is not a question of opinion. It is a question of state's responsibility under international law.

It is not a question of morals. It is just a question of human rights.

And yes, there are governments that do not share our views even in Europe. But there are many of us that do so.

Also remember that each and every one of us has a role and a responsibility to fight intolerance. One person can make a difference. The greatest danger to a society is not the evil from the evil people. The greatest danger is when the good people are silent.

Thank you. And welcome to Stockholm!

2013



REGERINGSKANSLIET
Government Offices of Sweden

Speech
Helsinki 16 September 2013
Erik Ullenhag, Minister for Integration

Speech on 4th International Roma Conference

Roma women, President Halonen, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, I would like to thank the Finnish Government, the Council of Europe and all Roma women activists who have made this conference possible.

And a special thank you to President Halonen. I know that you have made a great difference on the issue of Roma women. At a time when we lack political leadership in protecting human rights, you are an inspiration to me and others. Your political leadership should be an inspiration to political leaders around Europe.

And then I would like to thank Hannaholmen for all that you are doing to promote cooperation between Finland and Sweden. We have a long shared history which has created strong ties between our countries. Sweden would not have been what it is today without Finnish migration, which has been crucial for the development of modern Sweden. And being here at Hannaholmen, I will take the opportunity to continue in Swedish.

When it comes to Roma, the history of Europe has been dark. Very dark. Roma have been kept as slaves. During the Second World War, thousands of Roma were murdered by the Nazis in what has been called the 'forgotten Holocaust'. Sweden, too, where Roma have lived for more than 500 years, has much to be ashamed of. During the seventeenth century, there were decrees ordering the execution of Roma men. Women and children were banished from the country. All through history, Roma have been denied the right to go to school, to vote or to settle where they wanted. And Swedish authorities have even carried out forced sterilisation of Roma.

We need to know about this history. It helps us to understand the credibility gap between Roma and society at large. Right now in Sweden, we are working on a white paper on injustices towards the Roma during the twentieth century. We need to acknowledge what has happened and close the book on the past before we can move forward.

But unfortunately, much still remains to be done. The situation of Roma around Europe is often unacceptable. In many parts of Europe, there is widespread anti-ziganism. Before last Christmas, a Hungarian journalist with links to the party in government wrote in one of the largest daily newspapers that Roma are animals and should be killed. In France, Roma have been forcibly expelled from the country and around Europe Roma children are placed in special schools - just because they are Roma. In Sweden Roma still encounter prejudice and discrimination.

I honestly do not know what I would say to my children if I were told there was no room for my family and myself at a hotel - when it turned out there was room for the next family. I do not know how it feels to be treated in this way, but I do know I have a duty to act so that it does not happen.

Our joint efforts for Roma inclusion must include Roma participation. Furthermore, we must highlight gender equality issues, and here the issue of Roma women's influence is central. Roma women are often subjected to discrimination twice over. They are discriminated against because they are women and they are discriminated against because they are Roma. But I know that you Roma women, you Roma activists, have enormous strength. In my work as a government minister, I therefore regularly meet Roma women and Roma women's organisations. You are key players in efforts for Roma inclusion. For example, I know that many young women and girls do a fantastic job building bridges in school. We see that these bridge-builders have an important function and contribute to more young girls actually going to school. And we must reach the point where Roma girls are treated just like any member of the majority community. Society and the school must react when a Roma girl stays away from school. Otherwise we are letting that girl down - just because she is a Roma.

I would like to conclude by telling you about a Roma preschool that I visited. The children at the preschool had built a LEGO exhibition illustrating their dreams for the future. They dreamed of being police officers, nurses, doctors or firefighters. Just like at any preschool anywhere in Sweden. For me, it was tremendously positive to see the dreams of these Roma children and to see that these days they are dreaming of becoming police officers, the very symbol of the ultimate power of the state and its monopoly on violence. So these Roma children felt a sense of belonging to society that I do not believe their parents felt at the same age.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a history to be ashamed of when it comes to the situation of Roma in Sweden and Europe. Let us now see to it that we have a future to be proud of. We have a responsibility to ensure that the Roma children who dream of becoming police officers or doctors can realise their dreams.

Thank you.



Speech

Raoul Wallenberg Day 27 August 2013

Erik Ullenhag, Minister for Integration

Personal courage and bravery - exploring the limits of diplomacy

Ladies and gentlemen,

Now when memories of the Holocaust become history, when fewer and fewer can tell us what actually happened - all good forces need to fight for the true history. Even if it is hard, we must find the words to keep on telling the story and to make history part of today.

In doing so, we must also tell the story of human beings who actually made a difference. Like Raoul Wallenberg. To remember Raoul Wallenberg and his determination to do the right thing is a way of keeping history alive.

Raoul Wallenberg had an outstanding personal courage. He was a super hero. And he truly explored the limits of diplomacy. Raoul Wallenberg was a man thinking outside the box. He ignored rules. Rules that so many others would not have dared to ignore. And he came up with many creative solutions. He made Schutz-passes, he lured and he manipulated.

Of course, it takes a very special person and a lot of courage in order to do the things Raoul Wallenberg did. Raoul Wallenberg did not think of his personal situation or his future career.

I sincerely hope that the Swedish Foreign Affairs would have recognised Wallenberg's great achievements if he would have returned to Sweden. But I'm not sure. Would Wallenberg's destiny have been the same as the situation for another brave Swedish diplomat who ignored rules and came up with creative solutions. Ambassador Harald Edelstam made heroic things and saved thousands human lives during the coup d'etat in Chile in 1973. But his actions were not approved by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and his future career was damaged.

So when is it right to ignore rules? Which rules can be ignored? Where do we draw the limits of diplomacy? Without going into personal responsibility under public international law I will make it simple. Rules should be ignored when it leads to the protection of human rights and especially human lives.

How do we create an organisation where individuals like Raoul Wallenberg can grow? An organisation which inspires people to think outside the box. Sometimes I believe that too many of us don't dare to be uncomfortable. It's easier to go with the flow and grow a culture of consensus. And it is also a question about loyalty. One must ask - can there be too much loyalty within an organisation?

"Why do they scream these things dad? Do they try to be cool?"

It is the children of the Rabbi in Malmö Shneur Kesselman that pose the question. Kesselman has suffered from over 70 anti-Semitic incidents in one year.

What would I answer if it was my kids that posed the question? How would I try to explain the hatred from unknown people? I sincerely don't know. But I do know that we have a duty to fight anti-Semitism. To teach our children not to hate. To teach the lessons of the past. No one should be afraid of meeting the pure hatred in a street in Sweden - the country of Raoul Wallenberg.

Ladies and gentlemen,

No country is free from racism and intolerance. Despite strong traditions of democracy and respect for human rights we face, in the Swedish society, anti-Semitism, as well as intolerance towards other groups, such as Muslims and Roma. And sadly, xenophobia, homophobia and intolerance is still alive in Europe. Populist political parties are growing in several European countries. In some cases, these parties have been allowed to shift the entire political map. Established parties have adapted to the intolerant messages. Those who stand up for openness and tolerance have been far too quiet. We have seen the patterns before. But we cannot risk paying the price of not doing anything. As Europeans, as democrats, as people deeply committed to human rights, we need to meet this challenge.

Political leaders have a special responsibility. We need to stand up and take the debate in order to protect human rights and promote an open society. We also need to be crystal clear on the international scene. And from the Swedish Government we will continue to stand up for human rights even when it is uncomfortable. Today it is important to speak up against the inhuman LGBT-laws in Russia, to criticize the deeply worrying constitutional changes in Hungary and to take the fight against the widespread antiziganism in today's Europe. We must call a spade a spade especially when it comes to human rights.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am so proud to represent the same country as Raoul Wallenberg. But to be honest. I can't be proud of Swedish history concerning Wallenberg.

I'm sorry we left the Wallenberg family too alone. I'm sorry that we did not, for a long time, tell the story of Raoul Wallenberg. I'm sorry we did not dare to do enough to find out what happened to the brave Swedish diplomat.

Raoul Wallenberg showed us that one man can make a difference. Raoul Wallenberg decided that he did not want to be a bystander saying that he had no choice.

Later today I will have the honour to give a person the first Swedish Raoul Wallenberg prize. The prize goes to a person who combats xenophobia and intolerance in Sweden today. This first prize winner is Siavosh Derakhti who is here today. Siavosh is the founder of Young Muslims Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia and in his everyday life he struggles to fight anti-semitism and intolerance in Malmö. I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you Siavosh. Thank you for your important work. You are a strong young man who wants to make a difference. And you are an inspiration for others.

We need more individuals like Siavosh who says no to intolerance. We need more individuals who stand up for openness, democracy and human rights. Each and every one of us has a role and a responsibility to fight racism and intolerance of today. Not all can be heroes like Raoul Wallenberg. But all of us can do something.

An important safeguard for democracy and human rights is to create an atmosphere in public organisations where people like Raoul Wallenberg and Harald Edelstam are seen as heroes.

The greatest danger to a society is not the evil from the evil people. The greatest danger is when the good people are silent.

Thank you





Speech

Budapest, Hungary 17 January 2013

Erik Ullenhag, Minister for Integration

The Living Legacy of Raoul Wallenberg

To be checked against delivery.

Survivors of the Holocaust, Raoul Wallenberg laureates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to thank the Holocaust Memorial Centre and the Raoul Wallenberg association. It is a great honour for me to be here and to talk about the living legacy of Raoul Wallenberg.

It has always been impossible for me to understand the evil behind the Holocaust. How was it possible that millions and millions of individuals were killed so systematically? How could ordinary men and women become the perpetrators in the worst crime against humanity?

And I can never completely understand how it feels. How it feels to have been subjected to the inhuman treatment of the Nazis. How it feels to be a son of someone who has survived the Holocaust but who is marked with a big scar for the rest of his or her life.

Even though it is impossible to fully understand, we have a duty to the victims to try to understand. We have a duty to commemorate all the victims. And we have a duty to act - to secure that the history is never forgotten and that the necessary lessons are learned for the future.

Now when memories of the Holocaust become history, when fewer and fewer can tell us what actually happened - all good forces need to fight for the true history. Even if it is hard, we must find the words to keep on telling the story and to make history part of today.

But we must also tell the story of individuals who actually made a difference. Like Raoul Wallenberg. To remember Wallenberg and his determination to do the right thing is also a way of keeping history alive.

His courage, shown here on the streets of Budapest, should in every way possible be highlighted and remembered in the fight against anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance such as anti-Gypsyism.

I'm so proud to represent the same country as Raoul Wallenberg. But to be honest, I can't be proud of Swedish history concerning Wallenberg. It took us too long to really tell the story of Raoul Wallenberg. During the cold war, we didn't dare do enough to find out what happened to the brave Swedish diplomat.

Last year Raoul Wallenberg would have turned 100 years old. Due to this fact the Swedish Government decided to commemorate Wallenberg throughout 2012. I am very glad to say that during the year more than 50 countries have taken part in remembering Raoul Wallenberg through exhibitions, seminars and events such as this.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the spirit of the work and legacy of Raoul Wallenberg the Swedish Government stands firm in its commitment to fight anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsyism, xenophobia and related intolerance. Experience shows us that the fight for tolerance, openness and humanity must be a never-ending process. The work is never done and completed. Every day we must stand up for human rights and democracy. Every day we must promote an open and tolerant society.

Sadly, anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism are still alive in Europe. Populist political parties are growing in several European countries. In some cases, these parties have been allowed to shift the entire political map. Established parties have adapted to the intolerant messages. Those who stand up for openness and tolerance have been far too quiet. We have seen the patterns before. But we cannot risk paying the price of not doing anything. As Europeans, as democrats, as people deeply committed to human rights, we need to meet this challenge.

Also in Sweden we have a xenophobic party in the parliament. However, for the Swedish government it is clear - we will not let this party gain influence on politics in Sweden. We will not let them move the political map towards intolerance.

"Why do they yell these things dad? Do they try to be cool?"

It is the children of the Rabbi in Malmö Shneur Kesselman that pose the question. Kesselman has suffered from over 70 anti-Semitic incidents in one year.

What would I answer if it was my kids that posed the question? How would I try to explain the hatred from unknown people? I sincerely don't know. But I do know that we have a duty to fight anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsyism and other forms of intolerance. To teach our children not to hate. To teach the lessons of the past. No one should be afraid of meeting the pure hatred in a street in Sweden - the country of Raoul Wallenberg.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Throughout history Europe has not only suffered of anti-Semitism but also of anti-Gypsyism. During the Holocaust more than half a million Roma were killed by the Nazis. I am ashamed to say that in Sweden, Roma has been forced to sterilization in modern times. Despite these horrors, anti-Gypsyism is still alive in Europe today.

The often cruel and harsh reality of Roma is not a part of the public discourse; it is not even spoken of in the classrooms. I believe there is a connection between the lack of knowledge and the marginalisation of Roma.

Related

- [Debate article: The living Legacy of Raoul Wallenberg](#)

This has to change. The Swedish government have decided to take concrete measures to enhance the position of Roma in the labour market and in education.

Our goal is that a child that is born in Sweden with Roma descent in 2012 should in 20 years have the same opportunities as any other citizen. This is something that has to become a reality in all Member states in the European Union. The discrimination of Roma people has to stop.

Many of us know the following lines:

First they came for the communists,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist.

Then they came for the jews,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the catholics,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a catholic.

Then they came for me,
and there was no one left to speak for me.

This was a poem by the German Martin Niemöller who first was a supporter of Hitler but changed his mind and then was arrested and put in a concentration camp.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Raoul Wallenberg showed us that one man can make a difference. Raoul Wallenberg decided that he did not want to be a bystander saying that he had no choice. Instead he said - To me there's no other choice.

We need more individuals like Raoul Wallenberg. We need more courage and humanity. Not all can be heroes like Wallenberg. But all of us can do something.

The greatest danger to a society is not the evil from the evil people. The greatest danger is when the good people are silent.

Each and every one of us has a role and a responsibility to fight anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance of today. That is the best way we can honour the legacy of Raoul Wallenberg.

I am so pleased to be part of this ceremony today to honour the laureates and their crucial work. Because of your efforts and brave attitude we can honestly say that the legacy of Mr Raoul Wallenberg lives on.

Thank you!

2012



REGERINGSKANSLIET
Government Offices of Sweden

Speech
Stockholm 19 October 2012
Erik Ullenhag, Minister for Integration

Speech at the conference "Raoul Wallenberg - symbol or mystery?"

Ladies and gentlemen,

You have since yesterday been talking about Raoul Wallenberg - Symbol or mystery. You have been listening to eminent persons with great knowledge of our Swedish hero. For me, Raoul Wallenberg is a great symbol of the difference one man can make.

It has always been impossible for me to understand. Understand the evil behind the Holocaust. Understand how ordinary men and women could become the perpetrators in the worst crime against humanity?

And I can never fully understand how it feels. How it feels to have been subjected to the inhuman treatment of the Nazis. How it feels to be a son of someone who has survived the Holocaust but who is marked with a big scar for the rest of his life.

Even though it is impossible to fully understand, we have a duty to the victims to try to understand. We have a duty to commemorate all the victims. We must never let the Holocaust deniers win. Those who were murdered in the death camps of the Nazis must not also be deprived of their deaths.

Now when memories of the Holocaust become history, when fewer and fewer can tell us what actually happened - all good forces need to fight for the true history. Even if it is hard, we must find the words to keep on telling the story and to make history part of today.

But we must also tell the story of human beings who actually made a difference. Like Raoul Wallenberg. To remember Raoul Wallenberg, the hero, the symbol, and his determination to do the right thing is also a way of keeping history alive.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am so proud to represent the same country as Raoul Wallenberg. His brave diplomatic work in Budapest saved tens of thousands of lives. But to be honest. I can't be proud of Swedish history concerning Wallenberg.

I'm sorry we left the Wallenberg family too alone.

I'm sorry that we did not, for a long time, tell the story of Raoul Wallenberg.

I'm sorry we did not dare to do enough to find out what happened to the brave Swedish diplomat.

Now, Sweden is determined to give Wallenberg the place in history that he deserves. One way of doing that is to highlight, in different ways, his deeds and fate. The Swedish Government has decided to commemorate Raoul Wallenberg throughout 2012. As a result there have been many Raoul Wallenberg activities in Sweden and abroad.

"Why do they scream these things dad? Do they try to be cool?"

It is the children of the Rabbi in Malmö Shneur Kesselman that pose the question. Kesselman has suffered from over 70 anti-Semitic incidents in one year.

What would I answer if it was my kids that posed the question? How would I try to explain the hatred from unknown people? I sincerely don't know. But I do know that we have a duty to fight anti-Semitism. To teach our children not to hate. To teach the lessons of the past. No one should be afraid of meeting the pure hatred in a street in Sweden - the country of Raoul Wallenberg.

Sadly, anti-Semitism is still alive in Europe. Populist political parties are growing in several European countries. In some cases, these parties have been allowed to shift the entire political map. Established parties have adapted to the intolerant messages. Those who stand up for openness and tolerance have been far too quiet. We have seen the patterns before. But we cannot risk paying the price of not doing anything. As Europeans, as democrats, as people deeply committed to human rights, we need to meet this challenge.

No country is free from racism and intolerance. Despite strong traditions of democracy and respect for human rights we face, in the Swedish society, anti-Semitism, as well as intolerance towards other groups, such as Muslims and Roma.

But in the spirit of the work and legacy of Raoul Wallenberg the Swedish Government stands firm in its commitment to fight anti-Semitism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Experience shows us that the fight for tolerance, openness and humanity must be a never-ending process. The work is never done and completed. Every day we must stand up for human rights and democracy. Every day we must promote an open and tolerant society.

Political leaders have a responsibility. We need to stand up and take the debate in order to protect and promote the open society. We also need to take concrete actions to stop intolerance. The schools and the educational system are key areas. Here in Sweden, the Living History Forum as well as non-governmental organisations is making a huge contribution to our fight against intolerance.

When fighting fanaticism I believe that we need to focus on the moderate part of the population. And the good

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- [Raoul Wallenberg](#)

thing is that they are often in majority. Saying this, it is of course important to try to have an impact also on the fanatics. For example populist political parties and individuals that are promoting xenophobia and other intolerant views.

But we must not forget the public in general, the ones who could be the bystanders. We must do our best to see to that more individuals say no to intolerance. We need more individuals who stand up for openness, democracy and human rights.

Many of us know the following lines by the German author Martin Niemöller:

First they came for the Communists
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists
and I did not speak out
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me
and there was no one left
to speak out for me.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Raoul Wallenberg showed us that one man can make a difference. Raoul Wallenberg decided that he did not want to be a bystander saying that he had no choice. Instead he said - To me there's no other choice. Wallenberg's bold methods put him in great danger. The last time he met his colleague Per Anger he said

"I've taken on this assignment, and I will never be able to go back to Stockholm without knowing inside myself that I'd done all a man could do to save as many Jews as possible".

The greatest danger to a society is not the evil from the evil people. The greatest danger is when the good people are silent.

Each and every one of us has a role and a responsibility to fight anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance of today. Not all can be heroes like Raoul Wallenberg. But all of us can do something. That is the best way we can honour the legacy of Raoul Wallenberg.



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

Strasbourg 02 October 2012

Erik Ullenhag, Minister for Integration

Speech at The Council of Europe

Ms Louis von Dardel, representing the Wallenberg family, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

It has always been impossible for me to understand the evil behind the Holocaust. How could ordinary men and women become the perpetrators in the worst crime against humanity?

And I can never fully understand how it feels. How it feels to have been subjected to the inhuman treatment of the Nazis. How it feels to be a son of someone who has survived the Holocaust but who is marked with a big scar for the rest of his life.

Even though it is impossible to fully understand, we have a duty to the victims to try to understand. We have a duty to commemorate all the victims.

We must never let the Holocaust deniers win. Those who were murdered in the death camps of the Nazis must not also be deprived of their deaths.

Even if it is hard, we must find the words to keep on telling the story and to make history part of today.

But we must also tell the story of human beings who actually made a difference. Like Raoul Wallenberg. To remember Wallenberg and his determination to do the right thing is also a way of keeping history alive. His courage should in every way possible be highlighted and remembered in the fight against intolerance and in the fight against anti-Semitism of today.

I am so proud to represent the same country as Raoul Wallenberg. But to be honest, I can't be proud of Swedish history concerning Wallenberg. I am sorry we have left the Wallenberg family too alone. I am sorry that we did not for a long time tell the story of Raoul Wallenberg. I am sorry we didn't dare to do enough to find out what happened to the brave Swedish diplomat.

Now, Sweden is determined to give Wallenberg the place in history that he deserves. We have in the Swedish Government decided to commemorate Raoul Wallenberg throughout 2012 and many activities are currently underway in Sweden and abroad.

The greatest danger to society is not the evil from the evil people. The greatest danger is when the good people are silent.

Anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance is still alive in today's Europe. Let us jointly stand up against this. Let us be inspired by Raoul Wallenberg who's courage and determination should be remembered in the continuing fight against xenophobia and intolerance. Let this fight be the living legacy of Raoul Wallenberg.



Speech

High-level symposium at Yad Vashem, The International Institute for Holocaust Research, Jerusalem, Israel 26 June 2012

Erik Ullenhag, Minister for Integration

The Living Legacy of Raoul Wallenberg

First of all I would like to thank Yad Vashem and Chairman Shalev for the invitation. It is a great honour for me to be here and to talk about the living legacy of Raoul Wallenberg, at Yad Vashem which has recognized Wallenberg as a Righteous among the Nations, and which plays such a crucial role in efforts to remember and learn from the horrors of the Holocaust. I am grateful to Deputy Minister Ayalon for being here to represent the Israeli Government, to Mr Michael Wernstedt who is a member of Raoul Wallenberg's family, and to the members of the Swedish community for being here today. I am particularly honoured by the presence of those of you who are survivors yourselves and who join in today's tribute to Wallenberg.

It has always been impossible for me to understand the evil behind the Holocaust. How was it possible that millions and millions of individuals were killed so systematically? How could ordinary men and women become the perpetrators in the worst crime against humanity?

And I can never fully understand how it feels. How it feels to have been subjected to the inhuman treatment of the Nazis. How it feels to be a son of someone who has survived the Holocaust but who is marked with a big scar for the rest of his life.

Even though it is impossible to fully understand, we have a duty to the victims to try to understand. We have a duty to commemorate all the victims. And we have a duty to act - to secure that the history is never forgotten and that the necessary lessons are learned for the future.

We must never let the Holocaust deniers win. Those who were murdered in the death camps of the Nazis must not also be deprived of their deaths. The Holocaust deniers have an interest in twisting the history. And unfortunately the survivors are getting fewer. Now when memories of the Holocaust become history, when fewer and fewer can tell us what actually happened - all good forces need to fight for the true history.

Even if it is hard, we must find the words to keep on telling the story and to make history part of today.

But we must also tell the story of human beings who actually made a difference. Like Raoul Wallenberg. To remember Wallenberg and his determination to do the right thing is also a way of keeping history alive. His courage should in every way possible be highlighted and remembered in the fight against intolerance and in the fight against anti-Semitism of today.

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This year Raoul Wallenberg would have turned 100 years old. Now, Sweden is determined to give Wallenberg the place in history that he deserves. We have in the Swedish Government decided to commemorate Raoul Wallenberg throughout 2012 and many activities are currently underway in Sweden and abroad. This event is an example of that.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the spirit of the work and legacy of Raoul Wallenberg the Swedish Government stands firm in its commitment to fight anti-Semitism, xenophobia and related intolerance. Experience shows us that the fight for tolerance, openness and humanity must be a never-ending process. The work is never done and completed. Every day we must stand up for human rights and democracy. Every day we must promote an open and tolerant society.

Sadly, anti-Semitism is still alive in Europe. Populist political parties are growing in several European countries. In some cases, these parties have been allowed to shift the entire political map. Established parties have adapted to the intolerant messages. Those who stand up for openness and tolerance have been far too quiet. We have seen the patterns before. But we cannot risk paying the price of not doing anything. As Europeans, as democrats, as people deeply committed to human rights, we need to meet this challenge.

Also in Sweden we have a xenophobic party in the parliament. However, for the Swedish government it is clear - we will not let this party gain influence on politics in Sweden. We will not let them move the political map towards intolerance.

No country is free from racism and intolerance. In my own country, despite strong traditions of democracy and respect for human rights, we still face instances of anti-Semitism, as well as intolerance towards other groups, such as Muslims and Roma.

In the city of Malmö, in southern Sweden, there has been a rise in the number of Jews who have suffered anti-Semitic harassment and some Jewish families have even left the city.

"Why do they yell these things dad? Do they try to be cool?"

It is the children of the Rabbi in Malmö Shneur Kesselman that pose the question. Kesselman has suffered from over 70 anti-Semitic incidents in one year.

What would I answer if it was my kids that posed the question? How would I try to explain the hatred from

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The message from the Swedish government concerning the situation in Malmö is crystal-clear - we will never accept anti-Semitism. We stand firm in our commitment and will continue to combat anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance. As Minister, I work closely with the vibrant Jewish community of Sweden on these issues. All Swedes must be able to live their lives without fear of threats or harassment. Sweden should be a good country to live in for Jews and all other minorities. It is the responsibility of the public and local authorities, the police and the justice system.

The Swedish Government will also in the coming years intensify efforts to teach children and young people about xenophobia and intolerance, an essential part of combatting hatred. In order to strengthen the security for the Jewish population, the Government has also, sadly I must say, provided financial support to the Jewish community in Sweden.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Political leaders have a responsibility. We need to take concrete actions to stop intolerance. The schools and the educational system are key areas. We appreciate the long and close cooperation that Swedish schools and educators have had with Yad Vashem on how to teach the lessons of the Holocaust. Further, we need to stand up and take the debate in order to protect and promote the open society.

When fighting fanaticism I believe that we need to focus on the moderate part of the population. And the good thing is that they are often in majority. Saying this, it is of course important to try to have an impact also on the fanatics for example populist political parties and individuals that are promoting xenophobia and other intolerant views. But we must not forget the public in general, the ones who could be the bystanders. We must do our best to see to that more individuals say no to intolerance. We need more individuals who stand up for openness, democracy and human rights.

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Thank you!