

**The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation
Bestowal Ceremony of the Raoul Wallenberg
Centennial Medal to the Honorable Irwin Cotler
Dr. Mordecai Paldiel -- Ottawa, Canada; October 28th, 2014**

Mr. Speaker of the House of Commons, the Honorable Andrew Scheer, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honorable John Baird, the Honorable Thomas Mulcair, the Honorable Justin Trudeau, Mrs. Ariela Cotler -- distinguished Ambassadors, community and religious leaders, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great honor for me to be here today, in the House of Commons of Canada, representing the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, on the occasion of the bestowal of the Raoul Wallenberg Centennial Medal to the Honorable Irwin Cotler.

I would like to convey the warm greetings from the Chairman of our Foundation, Mr. Eduardo Eurnekian, and from its Founder, Mr. Baruch Tenenbaum, who unfortunately were not able to be with us.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot think of a worthier recipient of this award than Prof. Irwin Cotler. This tribute transcends any partisan considerations and the presence of the leaders of the three main political parties is a clear reminder of that.

We are bestowing the Raoul Wallenberg Centennial Medal to the Honorable Irwin Cotler for his unwavering commitment to preserving the legacy of the heroic Raoul Wallenberg, and for Mr. Cotler's relentless efforts to secure answers on the fate and whereabouts of Raoul Wallenberg. Also, for the lifelong struggle of the honorable Irwin Cotler in favor of human rights causes and for his efforts to instill in the young generations the lessons of the Shoah and its rescuers, through countless lectures, speeches, publications, as well as academic and political activities.

Prof. Cotler's resume is indeed prolific. He served as a distinguished Professor of Law at McGill University and director of its Human Rights Program. A Member of Parliament since 1999; Minister of Justice and Attorney General from 2003 to 2006. He is the recipient of numerous honorary doctorates and distinctions, an Officer of the Order of Canada, and a world-renowned human rights activist. He is also a sought-after lecturer and speaker.

Prof. Cotler has been identified with Raoul Wallenberg and his legacy for many years. In 1990, he chaired an International Commission of Inquiry regarding the fate and whereabouts of Raoul Wallenberg. This commission, which was composed of distinguished personalities, including Prof. Guy von Dardel, Raoul's half-brother, offered thought-provoking findings and question marks that contradicted the official Soviet version regarding Raoul's fate. He gave numerous lectures, speeches and wrote countless articles about Raoul's legacy and personal tragedy; in fact, becoming an international spokesperson on the subject.

Professor Cotler is also an Honorary Member of the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, and as such he is a continuous source of inspiration and wisdom, helping us with

our mission and activities.

Our NGO's mission is to research and divulge the spirit of solidarity displayed by the Swedish diplomat and those following his example. We focus on research and education, trying to unveil unknown stories of rescue and striving to instill in the hearts and minds of the young generations the spirit of civic solidarity, as exemplified by Raoul Wallenberg.

In the story of Raoul Wallenberg, we should like to emphasize that he was a hero but also a victim. In fact, he was imprisoned by the Soviets on January 17th, 1945, never to be seen again. We are committed to find out what happened to him and in this context we have offered a 500,000 Euros reward for any scientifically reliable information on his fate.

I would like to quote Chairman Eurnekian's words on this occasion: *"It is a great honor for the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation to present this award to our dear friend, Prof. Irwin Cotler, a great and outspoken defender of human rights causes who has made an outstanding contribution to spreading the legacy of Raoul Wallenberg. It is a special privilege to bestow this medal in the House of Commons of Canada, a country which has granted honorary citizenship to this Swedish hero"*.

Presently, on behalf of the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, I congratulate Prof. Irwin Cotler on this well-merited recognition -- the Raoul Wallenberg Centennial Medal.

Thank you.

(Medal presented to the Honorable Irwin Cotler)