



# Raoul Wallenberg Forest

In Memory of an  
Outstanding Humanitarian  
and a Righteous Among  
the Nations



קרן קיימת לישראל  
K K L - J N F

Keren Kajemet Sverige





# Raoul Wallenberg (1912 - ?)



In March 1944, Germany occupied Hungary and installed a puppet government. During the following months of April and May the mass deportation of Hungarian Jews to concentration camps in Poland began. Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat stationed in Budapest between 1944 and 1945, launched a rescue operation to save Jews from being deported to the death camps.

Wallenberg was born in 1912 to a prominent aristocratic banking family and studied architecture in the United States before joining his family's business. He arrived in Budapest, the Hungarian capital, on July 9, 1944. By then, 400,000 Hungarian Jews had already been deported. Wallenberg immediately began issuing thousands of Swedish protective passports and designated thirty-two buildings under Swedish diplomatic immunity in which to house Jews. Together with other diplomatic legations and international organizations Wallenberg set up an "international ghetto", including two hospitals and a soup kitchen, protected by neutral European countries.

On January 17, 1945 Raoul Wallenberg was abducted by the Soviet Red Army. The Soviets consistently denied having any knowledge of him, but in 1956 they finally released a statement that

he had died in prison in 1947; an announcement greeted with skepticism by the free world. In 1989 Wallenberg's diplomatic passport, cigarette case and other items were discovered in the basement of the KGB headquarters in Moscow and were returned to his family; his fate has remained a mystery.

Thanks to Wallenberg's valiant efforts close to 100,000 Hungarian Jews were saved from the German death camps. On November 26, 1963, Yad Vashem recognized Raoul Wallenberg as Righteous Among the Nations and in 1987 he was awarded honorary Israeli citizenship. Due to his courageous actions on behalf of Hungarian Jews, Raoul Wallenberg has been the recipient of numerous humanitarian honors in the decades following his presumed death.

A personal testament to Raoul Wallenberg's actions was given by the late Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, journalist and Knesset member:

*"One morning, a group of these Hungarian Fascists came into the house and said all the able-bodied women must go with them. We knew what this meant. My mother kissed me and I cried and she cried. Then, two or three hours later, to my amazement, my mother returned with the other women. It seemed like a mirage, a miracle. My mother was there – she was alive and she was hugging me and kissing me, and she said: 'He saved us.' I was thirteen years old and I knew who she meant because Wallenberg was a legend among the Jews".*



## Raoul Wallenberg Forest

KKL-JNF Sweden has dedicated a forest in Israel in the name of Raoul Wallenberg to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his birth, August 4, 2012. The chosen forest is located in KKL-JNF's Ramat Menashe Biosphere Park, a unique park located in the Ramat Menashe Biosphere Reserve, officially recognized by UNESCO in July 2011. The Raoul Wallenberg Forest, part of the biosphere reserve's buffer area, is composed of pine, cypress and broad-leaved trees. Originally planted in the 1950s and renewed in the 1990s, the forest is located close to Haifa, where Raoul Wallenberg was employed in a branch office of the Holland Bank for several months in 1935. Donor recognition for this forest can be found at KKL-JNF's central recognition sites: the HaZorea Recognition Site in the heart of the HaZorea Forest and Sweden Park in the President's Forest.

