



25th ANNIVERSARY

REMEMBERING SREBRENICA

LETTERS FROM BOSNIA

Dear Friend,

I was born in Srebrenica in 1986. Although, I was young and don't remember a lot of details, there are some memories that I just cannot forget. We lived in the Glogova village in the municipality of Bratunac. My parents married relatively young. My father worked as a taxi driver, and my mother, a housewife, took care of my younger brother, older sister and me, the middle child. After work, my father would always bring us a box full of biscuits from the Ljubivija Bridge. The bridge that connected two cities, Bratunac and Ljubivija, back then in one country, Yugoslavia. It always brought a smile and happiness on my face. Today, that same bridge is the border between two countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. According to my parent's conversations, people were satisfied and happy. They were safe, had a job, free health care, education and a number of other things... I still remember that my brother and I often waited for our father to return home so he would put us on his lap and drive us in his car...the mere 30 meters.

What I will always remember is May 9th, 1992. The day when my village of Glogova was attacked and my house demolished. When all of our photos and memories were set on fire. The day when I was lucky. When together with my parents we managed to survive and escape. In the end, that escape would last ten full years.

That day is also important because May 9th is marked as the day of victory against fascism in Europe. It is on this same day that the first mass shooting took place in Eastern Bosnia, where in my village in a few hours, in one day, 64 Bosniak civilians were killed by the joint forces of the Bratunac police, the Bratunac TO (Territorial Defense) and the JNA (Yugoslav People's Army).

We found ourselves in the woods. We were lucky to escape from our house. Many were arrested and deported in front of the village Mosque. We only took what we had on us. All our belongings, memories and everything else remained in the house. We found ourselves in dead silence and fear, we did not speak. Then we started hearing shootings and grenades. Our village was on fire, everything was on fire - every house was looted, later set on fire, and then demolished. An old man, our neighbor, ordered my father and several other younger men to cover themselves with leaves in case Serb soldiers showed up so that they would not be found. There was a loud explosion, we saw a huge cloud of smoke ... "it's Bekir's car" ... said mom ...



25th ANNIVERSARY

REMEMBERING SREBRENICA

LETTERS FROM BOSNIA

In the evening, the Serb soldiers left, and we went down the hill to our house, it was burning, water was pouring over our doorstep, and from the fire came the strange sound of burning furniture. Other houses nearby were all on fire. It was a surreal moment, like I was on a movie set. We couldn't take anything from the house, we were afraid it was mined, that is what my father said. We were unable to find other members of our family. They all fled in different directions. We teamed up with several other families and we continued our journey at night towards Srebrenica. We left our village in ashes on that day.

I lived in Srebrenica from 2006 to 2011. I often had the opportunity to see and hear on the streets people of Serb nationality denying genocide, singing Chetnik songs, denying the Bosnian language and the like. It is an everyday encounter for the returnees in Eastern Bosnia.

The perpetrators and those that have committed grave crimes, to an extent, have been prosecuted. Nevertheless, we face their followers on a daily basis especially in the smaller BiH entity. As a result, we have to work harder and to remember. We felt it on our skin and we don't want it to happen to anyone again. Hence, I will end with one sentence: Anyone who does not understand the pain of another should go to the Memorial Center in Srebrenica- Potocari, feel the silence and be surrounded by thousands of white tombstones.

Sincerely,

Ado Hasanović

Bratunac