



25th ANNIVERSARY

REMEMBERING SREBRENICA

LETTERS FROM BOSNIA

Dear Friend,

One afternoon my uncle, Safet Delkić, came home carrying something very special. I squealed with happiness and delight when I saw two big floppy ears. She was undeniably cute. I had begged my parents for a puppy to no avail, and my dream of finally getting one seemed more or less a reality. She used to chase me around the yard and nip at my heels, her dangly legs not yet in sync with her body. I remember a lot of happiness and laughter as everyone doted on the newest member of our family. Those were the good days, but the memories of a magical childhood soon came to an end.

The dog was the first to die. She became very sick one day and my father and uncle begged the vet for medicine, but they would not give medicine to Muslims. I did not think dogs had a religion so I did not understand why she had to suffer. She died a painful death. This was only the beginning. As the war of aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina began, the Serbs occupied my hometown of Prijedor. First, they fired all the non-Serbs from their jobs. This was the start of a brutal campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing against Bosnia and Herzegovina's non-Serb population. We were scared, hungry and wondering what was next. My uncle, an innocent civilian was the next member of my family to be killed by the Serbs. As the violence against Prijedor's non-Serb population progressed, I quickly saw my family members get taken away to various concentration camps where they suffered unimaginable torture at the hands of their Serb neighbors.

History tends to repeat itself and as Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel once said, for the dead and the living, we must bear witness. I am grateful to be alive, and with me I carry the stories of those who were not as lucky as me. They are no longer here to tell their truth, thus every action - whether large or small - to make their voice heard matters. It is our duty to give a voice to the voiceless and silence the deniers. Stories are meant to be told and these stories carry enormous lessons for future generations.

Sincerely,

Ajla Delkić

Prijedor