



25th ANNIVERSARY

REMEMBERING SREBRENICA

LETTERS FROM BOSNIA

Dear Friend,

I was born in a small but beautiful village called Osmaće close to the town of Srebrenica. I spent my childhood there but when I came of age in 1988, got married and moved to the town of Zvornik, located 53 km from Srebrenica. I had a nice peaceful life with my husband. His name was Meho Jusic. He worked and I was a housewife. In those happy days in 1989, I gave birth to my first born, a son. I named him Jasmin. We enjoyed every moment with our son as well as with my husband's family and relatives. Our happiness lasted until 1992.

In April 1992 Zvornik was under attack. My husband was working in one company. On April the 4th when he came back home from work he told me that it is going to be bloody Eid for us. That is what he had heard. I just stood there and looked at him.

A few days later we decided that I would leave the house with our two and a half year old son, while my husband would stay. Grenades started to fall all over the town and attacks from Serb soldiers were getting more and more frequent. I left on 7th of April to a village nearby called Jošanica. At that time I was pregnant for the second time. It was hard to leave our home and even harder to leave my husband. He decided to stay because somehow he believed that nobody would harm him or his family.

In the meantime, I managed to find a place to stay at Jošanica village with our son. Soon I received news that my husband, his brother, father and relatives were all murdered on our doorstep on 10th April. I cannot describe the pain I felt when I realized that I would never see my husband again, that I would never see him playing with our son and that our other child would never have the chance to meet him.



I stayed all alone without a home, money and without any hope. I managed to go to Divic, a suburb of Zvornik because all the people living there were Bosnians, so I felt I would be safe there. However that did not last.

People from there went to the Kula area above the town. I stayed there for the next few days with many people who fled their homes. Soon even that place was taken by Serb forces. They captured us and kept us there for a couple of days. Those days are hard for me to describe.

After days spent there, they brought trucks and swearing at 'our Turkish mother' they ordered us to climb. We were forced to come back to the town itself and to pay for the bills. I came back to my house. It was so hard to come back knowing that my husband was murdered there. Of course, I couldn't stay there for long because soldiers were coming back and checking.

I was ordered to leave the house and not come back. At that time I was 6 months pregnant. I didn't know what to do or where to go. I was helpless. Soldiers took me over the bridge connecting the two river banks of the Drina river. On one side it was Bosnia and on the other Serbia.

They brought me to one abandoned shop and they searched me looking for hidden money and gold. When they took it all, they demanded I say the names of my family members. When I said them, they saw their names on the list they had, and they knew they were all killed. Because they saw the name of my husband on that list they let me go.

I was free to go but where? I was alone with my son, I had nothing. I was in a country responsible for my husband's death. Was there anything left for me to hope for? I wanted to die as well, but when I looked at my son I knew I had to be strong. I begged on the street for food and during the night I would hide in a ruined house.

Somehow I managed to go by bus to Subotica, a city in the north of Serbia. There while I was begging again on the street, two men when they found out I was born in Srebrenica, where they were also born, and decided to help me. They gave me money for my passport so I could leave the country. I could never repay those men for helping me.



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From Subotica I went to Hungary. I stayed in Nagyjatad where in September 1992, I gave birth to my second son. Those days of fear were behind me, however the war in Bosnia lasted for years and I didn't know anything about my brothers and sisters who were in Srebrenica. It was agony for me not knowing what their fate was and if they were still alive and well. Thanks to the Red Cross I received a few letters from them and I felt a bit relieved because I knew they were all alive. I hoped and prayed to meet with them some day. I hoped that we would all be well.

However, that hope was drowned in July 1995 when my two brothers were murdered. I was devastated. After so many years, I still am.

Although so many people today talk about the war in Bosnia and genocide that happened in Srebrenica, there are so many people that are silent. Some people are more influential than others and therefore can do more, but I believe that all of us who survived war atrocities have obligations to speak up and do more so that the truth stays alive. I must never forget what happened because that is the least I can do for my husband and my brothers. I pass the truth about their deaths to my sons because they need to know what evil and hate can do to someone. Because of the generations of our children and one day, their children we must try to warn the world about what happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina, even if that warning is not as important to them as it is to us. The world watched how innocent people were killed and for those innocent people we must make sure that nobody may experience their fate!

Sincerely,

Mevlida Jusić

Zvornik