



25th ANNIVERSARY

REMEMBERING SREBRENICA

LETTERS FROM BOSNIA

Dear Friend,

Despite the fact that I was a child, I do have happy memories from before the war. People did not judge each other based on their background nor did we have much, but it was enough to be happy. Children from different villages played together; there was no place for racism or prejudices. We didn't even know what that meant. We enjoyed being part of the community where everyone was an equal.

The moment that has been engraved deep in my memory is when the army came to our front yard, to get us, my family and I; the feeling of fear that can not be described in words. When you don't know what will happen with your life and the lives of your loved ones; but, you know for sure that nothing good will happen.

You think that in a few moments, in a few days, your life will be over and you didn't even start to live it.

They were beating us. They were raping women. I saw with my own eyes the worst scenes that only happen in movies. The eyes of an eight year old and in my mind the question echoed "why us?" Since then, the same question echoes through my mind. I still hope that justice will prevail. I am here to fight in the name of the eight year old, and, the thirty-six year old. I am the only survivor. They killed my whole family - parents and six siblings.

I have realized a long time ago that silence is not golden. I must and have to talk about my experiences. I have to recount the painful past so that it does not happen to anyone again; and, I have to emphasize the good so that goodness prevails. I try to educate our community with my humble activism that hatred is not the answer. It is important to make both small and bigger steps with one goal; for Srebrenica not to happen to anyone, anywhere.

Sincerely,

Zijo Ribić

Tuzla