Cvjet istine i nade

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> A survivor who was five years old during the Srebrenica genocide in July 1995 recounts her separation from her grandfather at Potočari, her journey to safety with her mother and sister, and how she has carried his memory and his final words throughout her life.

SAŽETAK

This testimony comes from a child survivor of Srebrenica who was five years old when the enclave fell in July 1995. She describes the moment she was separated from her grandfather at Potočari, whom she never saw again, and the transport to Kladanj with her mother and younger sister. The speaker reflects on growing up in his absence—missing him at school milestones, family celebrations, and achievements—while her mother worked to provide stability and honor his final instruction: 'Take care of them, so they will be good.' Despite educational success and earning a doctorate, the speaker emphasizes that joy remained incomplete without him. The testimony concludes with her ongoing hope that her grandfather's remains might one day be identified and given a proper burial in Potočari, and her vision of eventual reunion in a place free from hatred and suffering.

KLJUČNE PORUKE

- The speaker was five years old in July 1995 when separated from her grandfather at Potočari; she has carried his final words—'Take care of them, so they will be good'—throughout her life.
- She was transported to Kladanj with her mother and younger sister while her grandfather remained in Srebrenica and never returned.
- Growing up without him marked every milestone: first day of school, competitions, academic achievements, and university completion—all undertaken with the sense that life was a trust (emanet) from him.
- The speaker's mother prioritized keeping the family safe and intact, fulfilling the grandfather's last instruction despite the trauma of separation and uncertainty.

> The speaker has earned a doctorate in science, which she frames as both her own and her mother's and grandfather's achievement.

> The testimony expresses ongoing hope that her grandfather's remains will be identified and buried in Potočari, and a broader hope for eventual reunion with lost loved ones in a place without hatred or suffering.

ČLANAK

A Child's Memory of July 1995

I am a child of Srebrenica. July 1995—I will never forget it. I was five years old. I can still hear the screams echoing from the factory. At that time, I did not understand their meaning or what caused them, but today I do. I know, and I do not forget. From Potočari, I was transported to Kladanj with my younger sister under my mother's care. I parted from my grandfather in Srebrenica. He hugged us both. He held us for a long time. He told my mother: "Take care of them, so they will be good." Those were his last words to her. He turned around several times to look at us. He waved. And we waved back to him. Grandfather left and never returned. We waited for him. Every day after July 1995, we waited for him. We hoped. As time passed, my mother spoke less and less about him coming back. Day after day, my mother cried more often, and we... we were silent and watched.

Growing Up in His Absence

I started first grade in elementary school. Grandfather was not there. I watched other children as their fathers and mothers brought them for their first day of school. I watched them and thought about how happy and proud my grandfather would have been. My grandfather was the one who was supposed to take me to school that day, even though he was not there. One hand was held by my mother, and with the other I held my grandfather's hand—he was somewhere there. He was watching me. I want you to know that. Day after day brought success and failure, many competitions, brilliant results. But the joy was incomplete. My sister and I knew that this life was a trust—an emanet—from my grandfather. We dedicated everything we did to him. My mother did everything to make sure we lacked nothing. I finished university. I was a top student. I earned my doctorate. My sister did as well. She followed me. Now I am a doctor of science. My mother's and my grandfather's doctor of science. My mother fulfilled the trust of my grandfather's last words. She kept us safe. And I hope that I have also fulfilled it. I try. Every day I try to be good.

Waiting and Hoping

We only hope. We hope that one day they will call us and say: "We found you. We have identified from your grandfather only one bone. Let us lower it into the holy earth of

Potočari." Oh, what I would give to know where your grave is, my grandfather. So that I could come to you. So that we could talk. Time unfolds. We hope to meet again with those dearest to us. And we hate no one. We only hope that we will all find ourselves in a place where there is no hatred, no pain, no suffering.

#Srebrenica genocide #Eyewitness testimony #Family separation and loss #Survivor testimony #Memory and trauma #Growing up after genocide #Reconciliation and hope

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