



“It is with great honour that I accepted to make these introductory words for the book written by Ms Duška Stanić, a longtime dedicated member of Lifeline Humanitarian Organization of Chicago, which was founded by my wife, HRH Crown Princess Katherine of Serbia, and started its work during the time the harrowing events detailed in this book took place.

This poignant memoir is a personal story of a young Serbian girl living through one of the most tragic events of the second half of the 20th century. Through the authors' point of view, we are transported into the heart of the Civil War in former Yugoslavia, a brutal conflict that raged from 1992 to 1995 and inflicted unimaginable horror on the people, leaving deep scars that unfortunately still resonate to this day. This terrible war, marked by widespread ethnic violence, serves as a grim reminder of the catastrophic consequences of ethnic hatred and political instability.

In this deeply personal journey of survival, the author intertwines her intimate story with the broader geopolitical situation, as well as the history of the Balkans during the 20th century which helps to explain the precursors for the Civil War, thus providing a rich, multifaceted perspective. She vividly describes life under the shadow of fear and uncertainty during the time of political and social deterioration preceding the beginning of open conflict and later, life under the constant threat of death. I was particularly moved by the descriptions of the emotional toll of the conflict on the author's family, as well as on reflections on her lost childhood innocence during these dark years. The psychological impact of war on survivors, especially children, is profound and cannot be overstated. Children, who should have been living a carefree life, playing, and learning with their peers, were instead exposed to the horrors of death and destruction. They witnessed atrocities that no one, let alone a child, should ever see.

This memoir is not merely a chronicle of suffering. It is a testament to the strength of the human soul. The chapters on the psychological aspects of war, the moral dilemmas faced by ordinary people who can be driven to commit atrocities under extraordinary conditions, and the crucial importance of faith during times of unbearable hardships provide profound insights into the human condition. The concluding reflections on the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of hope will doubtlessly leave a lasting mark on anyone who reads this work.

The conflict in the former Yugoslavia serves as a powerful lesson on the devastating effects of ethnic intolerance and wild aggression. It underscores the importance of promoting peace and understanding among different people. Remembering the atrocities as well as honouring the memory of those who suffered is essential in preventing such horror from recurring. By reflecting on these painful lessons, we can strive to build a more peaceful world, where the innocent are protected, and the horrors of war are confined to history books. This is why I am deeply proud of the work the Lifeline Humanitarian Organization, and everything they have achieved during this terrible conflict, particularly in organizing convoys of humanitarian help to the war-



inflicted areas where our people needed it the most, especially the children and the elderly.

With deep admiration for the courage and strength of those who lived through these dark times, I once again extend my appeal that we all strive to a world of understanding, respect and peace.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Aleksandar', written in a cursive style.

HRH Crown Prince Alexander