Aggression in Kosovo

AGGRESSION IN KOSOVO

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NATO Relief Worker Craig Davis, at the Brazda refugee camp in Macedonia, tried not to lose his balance as he passed out plastic bottles of water to the Kosovar Albanians. They were dehydrated after their struggle over the mountains. Their raised hands waved wildly as he shifted his weight to grab more bottles from the workers behind him in the truck. The desperation of the workers, combined with his own lack of sleep and the tension he had felt since the conflict began, drove up his racing adrenalin. In his peripheral vision he saw, lying on the edge of the human mass of refugees, a shrouded form. For some reason, he felt impelled to find out if this was a corpse or a person dying of thirst. He turned abruptly to the men behind him and shouted, "breaktime," then jumped down the backside of the truck and sprinted over to the body. It was a woman. In her arms, she held an infant, clutched to her naked breast. She murmured as he broke the seal on the bottle and lifted her head to drink. In order to stabilize her posture and to prevent the infant from falling, he hoisted himself beneath her and held them both in his arms. He balanced her head on his chest and she began to drink. Craig noticed that the woman was young, her long, dark hair tied up beneath a kerchief. Her aquiline nose and delicate cheekbones accentuated her beautiful eyes that turned to him wildly. When he saw her expression, he wondered if her mind had snapped.

Just then, an interpreter arrived. Another woman spoke softly to the two men. She had come from the same group of refugees as the young mother and child.

"Her name is Amina Haridinaj, and I thank you for her," spoke the older woman through the interpreter. As Craig was about to ask her where Amina came from, the interpreter gestured towards the border a few hundred yards away. Behind the barbed wire, a

Macedonian guard walked his dog. On the other side of the wire, the Kosovo side, a young man holding an infant raised his hands in supplication. A thin young woman with wavy black hair cried out to the young man. The hill behind her wore the early spring color of lime green.

"She says it's her cousin," the interpreter said to Craig. "She is promising that, if the guard will let him through with the sick baby, she will sign any papers necessary to guarantee their financial future." Craig still held Amina and her thirsty baby in his arms. Amina began to moan, and he offered her another bottle of water. He held it to her lips as if she were his own baby. At the same time, he shifted her bundled infant into the crook of his other arm. He looked up to see a Macedonian guard staring at her tender breasts. He quickly covered her chest with the open side of his jacket. He recalled that about twenty ethnic Albanian women had been reported killed, on the other side inside Kosovo, during a mass rape which had occurred after they had been forced to walk back from the border to their burned out villages. The Serbs had forced them into their training camp where they had raped and killed them. Craig fleetingly remembered that in Rwanda very young girls whose anatomy was not mature enough for penetration, were slit with blades to accommodate the soldiers' sexual organs, and then raped repeatedly until they died.

Craig looked down again at Amina, whose wild eyes seemed to calm, as if she sensed that his arms would help and not harm her. He thought that she could read his expression of compassion. His articulate eyes registered sensitivity to her pain and distress. Amina put up her hand and touched his cheek, and shifted her gaze to the top and then to the sides of his head. What she saw, in her delirium, was the face of her beloved husband. He had been shot in the back of the head by the Serb police, and left to die by the side of the road. She had been beaten about the neck and shoulders when she had stooped to comfort him. Now she saw his loving eyes fixed upon her, as they had been, the night before they had been forced from their home. He told her that, whatever happened, he was happier with her than he had ever imagined himself.

"Allah has blessed me with my girls," he had spoken tenderly. "My life is complete and I ask only for the safety of our family. If we can be together, that is all we will ever need." He had kissed her, and embraced their two young daughters.

Amina relived the moment; she was dreaming still. When she looked directly at Craig again and he peered deeply into her nut-brown eyes, he thought he could see into her soul, into the lake of

her spiritual beauty. Waves of suffering and fear flowed across it, but these could not diminish its depth.

This woman, accompanied now only by her baby daughter and an older woman from her own village, was an Ethnic Albanian. She represented one of half a million Kosovar Albanians forced to flee from her province by the orders of Milosevic. The NATO bombs had not deflected him from his purpose of "ethnic cleansing." Indeed, the delay during which peace offers were being negotiated, had ironically served his purpose. Milosevic had armed the Serbs and had instructed the military and the police to go from house to house. They would order the Ethnic Albanians to put their keys, money and jewelry on the kitchen table and to evacuate their house within thirty minutes. The people were then forced to walk through the cold, rainy early spring night, up over the mountains.

On the first night of the displacement, three children died and two women had given birth. Amina had seen a woman in labor, hunched by the side of the trail on the bare rocks, a woman who screamed in pain and who cried protests to those who tried to stop and to administer to her needs.

"No," she cried repeatedly, "I cannot have the baby here on the mountain. We will both die, and everyone else will die too." Amina had clutched the hands of her crying infant and her terrified seven year old daughter tightly. She had wondered if they would survive. What kind of world will the new baby see, born this cold night into the mountain rocks? What kind of world will her own daughters meet, if they lived through these bad times?

Now, Amina closed her eyes and rested her head on the chest of the American Relief Worker. She could not tell him that already, in addition to her husband, she had lost her seven year old daughter. She did not know if the girl was already dead, like her father. The little girl had been torn from her side, the night before, when the Macedonian soldiers had suddenly descended on the other camp and forced them all into buses. The Albanians had been rushed so brutally that many had been separated. Amina had lost her little girl. It had happened so suddenly. She had been asleep with her little ones beside her, when a soldier had quickly grabbed her arm and had yanked her to her feet. She had managed to clutch the wailing baby, but the girl had been pulled in another direction by another soldier. She had screamed as she felt herself being dragged through the muck, mud and human feces, to the buses. Other people were screaming as their children were being torn from them. Surely, I will see her again... the soldiers must have put her on another bus.

Amina felt her blood begin to freeze, and layers of ice formed in her brain. Hell is not full of fire. Hell is full of ice, full of freezing pain, not knowing what is happening to you, avalanches falling between you and your own tiny daughter. Amina had been shoved into a seat and crammed against a bus window. She had instinctively sheltered her wimpering infant beneath her cape. She had burrowed her shoulders around the baby to form a cave. The bus had suddenly lurched forward and then careened out of the border valley and up into the mountain passes. All of this passed through her mind again, for the thousandth time since the early morning, when it had happened. Amina lost track of time. Her eyes opened as she felt the American Relief Worker place her gently on the ground. He motioned to the older woman, who took Amina's hands as he turned away. He removed his jacket and placed it over Amina.

"I will come back to check on you," he said, reassuringly. Craig had seen, over the top of Amina's head, a sight that had warmed his heart in the middle of this frozen hell. While the workers were distracted by the unloading of more refugee tents, portable toilets, showers and food, a Macedonian border guard, the one who had, only minutes before, initially refused to allow the man with the infant to join his cousin, had changed his mind.

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Maxhide Tasholi turned back towards the voice of the Macedonian guard. What on earth was he saying now? He had inspected her papers, had heard her promise to care for her cousin Mechide and his daughter. The border guard had seemed impatient, and had given her a strange look. His dog, a German Shepherd, had pulled at the chain that restrained him. The guard had waved her on, shaking his head, no, no. The border guard motioned her back to the gate, and her cousin followed him. Maxhide did not know that the border guard had recognized her, that he was obeying the divine voice within him that told him to stop her from leaving. By the time his brain had processed this soul recognition, he was opening the gate and calling to her. The German Shepherd pulled vigorously at his leash, eager to resume his pacing walk, but the guard walked out into the boundary area of the border, the area where only nomads could live. He stepped into the dangerous boundary of his own life, meeting the passion of suffering with his own passion, committing the meaning of his life to her, to Maxhide. It happened so quickly that

she could not grasp it. Maxhide was stunned when the border guard held out his hand to her. He grasped her slender hand tightly, intensely. Her terracotta eyes, set off by her ivory skin, widened in the grey morning light.

"I am Idriz, Idriz Berisha," he said. "I will come to your home for the necessary signatures tonight. Give me your identification." He glanced down at the papers she slipped into his left hand. Idriz had not let go of her right hand while he spoke.

"I'll return it when I come tonight. It has your address? You do live outside Skopje?"

Idriz turned and nodded to Mechide, who shifted his infant to his shoulder. She was wrapped tightly in a pink blanket that covered every part of her except her face and a few lemon tufts of hair. Maxhide just had time to look intently at Idriz. Dark hair fell down over bronze eyes and partially hid the tanned face of a handsome farmer. Strong white teeth and a firm, well formed mouth smiled at her. He waved them on, and quickly returned to the gate. Soon it was locked. The whole incident had taken less than a minute. Nonetheless, many had seen it. In a few moments, Maxhide, her cousin and the quiet baby had cleared the hill to the line of trees budding in mauve and lime.

"I can't believe he did that," Mechide said quietly, as they walked over the hillside. "You know, he could be shot for disobeying the orders to let no more Kosovars out."

"Yes, well, the orders change every few hours, it seems," Maxhide said. "Thanks be to Allah, this is the work of Allah. Our prayers are answered. You and the baby are safe. What happened to your wife?"

"She died in the mountains. She twisted her bare feet and fell into a ravine. The soldiers shot her as she lay in the crevassse. They rode in their cars behind us and forced us to keep walking. She had bloodied her feet on the jagged rocks because when the soldiers robbed us, they took her brand new shoes. One of them claimed that his wife also had small feet. Another one said his brother had the same blood type as the Ethnic Albaninan men they had rounded up earlier to use for human shields in the NATO bombing and for live blood transfusions for the Serb casualties. They took my money and her jewelry. My shoes were too big for her, and she could not walk in them although she tried. If I had not been carrying the baby, she would have been thrown out of her mother's arms as she slid down the mountain." Tears ran down his face as he recalled the terror in his wife's voice as she fell.

“I have only this child, now, to live for,” Mechide said. “Were it not for her, I would want to die.”

“Hush, Mechide. Allah has spared you. You must never forget that there is a reason for that. Our family needs your help. You know that my brothers have been conscripted, like all the others. There is no one to help my father with the farm. You know that we are in danger because of the tensions in the country, because those who favor Milosevich may start a revolution. Please help us.”

“Of course,” he sighed, “I am grateful for my life and for my child. Many have less. I know it is a miracle that the border guard let me pass. What did he say to you?”

“He said he would come tonight for the signatures that will guarantee your financial security with us.” Maxhide paused as she thought of the handsome Idriz. She could not imagine what had inspired him, what had motivated him to put himself in such danger. She pondered in her heart. Maxhide began to feel the magnetism of the man who had risked himself to save her cousin. She felt herself drawn to Idriz, and she began to look forward to seeing his handsome face again. So soon. Tonight.

That evening, when the knock came at the door of the farmhouse, Maxhide was ready. She had cooked a meal for Idriz that would also be a homecoming feast for Mechide. She had roasted lamb and potatoes, baked fresh wheat bread, and located milk for the hungry baby. Maxhide had traded eggs from their poultry for the milk from the neighbor’s cow. Her face was radiant in the excitement of the moment, she smoothed her russet blouse, her eyes blazed. Idriz stood in amazement when the door opened. His heart pounded and he stammered a greeting.

“Hello, I am Idriz, and I came for the signatures.”

“Come in, come in, you have saved two lives in our family and you are a hero to us all,” Maxhide said in a rush, and then blushed. “Please come in and eat with us. We want to get to know you. You did such a brave thing. You have friends here, and your life will be blessed.”

“It already is,” said Idriz, taking her hand. He entered the neat cottage and saw her father behind her. White curtains lined the windows and several upholstered chairs faced the television beside the blue plaid sofa. The round dining table was neatly set with china, and he could see that the lace tablecloth was intended to honor him, the desired guest.

“Good evening , sir,” said Idriz, as he reached past her to grasp the old man’s hand. So began the alliance that would shape them all. For although Idriz was Macedonian, a conscript like the brothers of Maxhide, he was not a practicing Muslim. His family had been uprooted from Belgrade in 1981, the year after Tito died, when his own brothers had taken part in the Albanian student uprisings for independence. These had produced political refugees as well as martyrs, his brothers among them. Milosevich, a Communist and then a Serbian nationalist, had whipped up anti-Albanian hatred. The Berisha family had fled to the south. Their mother died, and their father, embittered by these losses, had turned from Allah. He had not kept his very young son active in the faith. The boy had grown up in an atmosphere of emotional deprivation, even starvation, and his lonely heart had enormous, unused reservoirs of feeling. Because he had the courage to look when others turned away, his heart overflowed suddenly when he met the woman destined to unlock the gates of his passion. That woman was Maxhide. He had acted on human love as the divine intervention. Now his home was with her and he saw the world through her eyes. Idriz had learned that love of another is not linked to time, but to human will and compassion. As he stood in the cottage that housed his sweetheart, his blood raced and he felt alive. He had felt different all day, from the moment he had set eyes on her. The evening light cast a radiance about her. The group sat down in the dining room, the smiling baby rocked in Maxhide’s arms, and the new life of the family began.

Earlier that same morning of April 7, 1999, inside the tent field hospital at the Brazda camp, American television journalist Ronald Deale, his hair sticking up like straw and his face worn and haggard, spoke carefully into the microphone that he held in his right hand.

“We are here on the abandoned airstrip outside of Skopje, a city in Macedonia, at the Brazda camp,” he began. “The suffering of the refugees is horrifying. But even more than the adults, the children are in terror. They cry a great deal or they do not register any emotions whatsoever. They cannot sleep. Their nightmares wake them screaming. The adults try, but they cannot comfort them. NATO is training Albanians to counsel the children. Outside, we can hear them playing a game. It is more than a game, it is therapy. It helps them to share their emotions in a group setting, and it makes reality more acceptable. The worst thing of all is that the children cannot make any sense of what they have seen. Take the case of Gani Izbica, the ten year old boy you are about to see. Gani was shot in the arm during a raid on his house. His mother and sisters were

killed, but he escaped, because he played dead. Gani is about to come to the microphone. He is groggy from the anesthesia, used during the operation to remove the bullet." Deale looked into the eyes of the child who shook his head in bewilderment.

"Tell us what happened, Gani." Deale spoke comfortingly to the boy.

"They shot my mother and my sisters! My mother is dead!" the boy cried.

"Who shot your mother and sisters, Gani?" the journalist inquired calmly.

"It was people from the town, people that I knew! They stormed into our house after dark, after my father left, and they shot us!" The camera returned to the face of Ronald Deale, who lifted the microphone to his own mouth.

"Gani's father was told to leave, because the police were rounding up all adult males between the ages of fourteen and sixty, and no one knew where they were being taken. He left with other men from the village. If they are lucky, they are still in the mountains, in hiding. Otherwise..." Deale did not complete his sentence. He looked down at the boy with compassion. "The doctors say that Gani will have only a scar from the bullet in his arm, but his scars inside will be harder to heal. This is Ronald Deale in the Brazda refugee camp outside Kosovo." Ronald turned back to the boy when the camera lights shut off. He asked Gani if he could return to visit him. The boy nodded, and lay back weakly.

On his way out of the field hospital Deale encountered Craig Davis. Deale had already interviewed the NATO team of Rescue Workers in which Craig served, so the men recognized each other.

"How's it going, Deale?" asked Craig. The afternoon light was somber under the pearl cloud cover.

"Well, every time I think it can't get any worse, it does. The atrocities are unbelievable." Deale spoke quietly.

"Let me tell you something good, for a change. Something I just saw with my own eyes. You know the Macedonian soldiers, the border guards, are under strict orders not to let any Kosovars out, not even into the safekeeping of relatives who sign for their financial security?" Deale nodded.

"Well, I just saw one of them quickly open the gates to let a young man pass with an infant. His cousin, a woman, came up to the gates to talk with the guard. At first the guard seemed to resist her

pleas, but after she had turned away, he relented, and called her back. God knows he will have to pay for that. I know the other guards saw him."

"How did you happen to see this? Did you get a name?" Deale pulled at the snaps of his jacket.

"As it happened, I was giving water to a young Kosovar mother, a breastfeeding woman who is in such bad shape she could not stand to get the water herself. After the guards opened the gates, I went over to see what I could find out. Two other guards were shouting his name to their supervisor and I overheard it. It's Idriz Berisha." Davis reached out to help remove Deale's jacket.

"I'll make note of it. When they move against him, if I interview him on international television, the press coverage may help his case."

"Good idea, Deale. I know there are a lot of stories that the public never gets to hear. There have to be Serbs who are helping their neighbors, even if they must keep it totally hidden. Let's go talk to him now before we lose track of him." The two men walked quickly across the fields separating the field hospital from the tents that housed the refugees. The sky had darkened to slate.

April 8, 1999

Maxhide opened her eyes to a rainy morning. She had been dreaming of her lover, Idriz. Lazily she began to recall everything that had taken place the night before. The family had finished eating before it was quite dark, and Idriz suggested that she show him around the property. The cloudy skies had not lifted, and the damp smell of earth beneath the pines contained vegetation and the promise of lilacs. The leaves had just begun to bud, and the spring birds called to each other. Maxhide's senses were in a heightened state and she saw the tree branches and the leaves in perfect detail. She smelled the delicious air. It seemed to her that happiness lies in the enjoyment of nature's beauty shared with another person. As the couple walked slowly towards the fence behind the cottage, Idriz told Maxhide that he was under arrest and that he might be jailed when he reported to his superior the next afternoon. The one hope, he said, lay in the meeting he had with the American journalist and the young NATO Rescue Worker who had come to his guard station at the border before he finished his watch. They told him they wanted to interview him on television, to publicize his intervention for Mechide

and his infant daughter. They had hoped it would help deflect the might of the Macedonian military in its efforts to punish him.

Maxhide was not surprised, but she became alarmed. She looked at him in fear and concern. They were passing the tractor shed behind the cottage, in the corner of the fence beside the plowed wheat fields. Idriz pointed, and they went inside. Suddenly his arms were around her, and they began to kiss with passionate intensity. Maxhide turned over in her bed as she remembered his kisses and her response. She recalled Idriz removing his shirt and placing it on the dirt floor of the shed, and then the quick fall to the ground below him. She had silently begged forgiveness from Allah for not waiting until her bridal night, but she knew that she might never see Idriz again. He was clearly her heart's intended. She gave him her love and tenderness in that short time before darkness fell. Never would she forget the low chuckle that he made, deep in his throat, an expression of joy, as he caressed her breasts and thighs. Never would she regret their lovemaking, no matter what the price. As she looked up, she knew that Allah had brought them together. Maxhide had not heard that life quickens before death, but she would have understood lovers the world over.

Now she heard the baby crying in the makeshift crib, a bureau drawer lined with blankets. She rose quietly and tried not to wake Mechide on the living room couch as she tiptoed past him. She reached for the baby and lifted her to her chest. "Little one," she whispered, "little one, you are wet and stinky but Maxhide will change you. We will care for you, pretty girl, are you Maxhide's pretty girl?" Suddenly she wondered if she might have a little girl of her own, a little girl belonging to Idriz. If he lives, she thought, if I live, if we live. One day at a time. She took the baby into the kitchen and prepared a bottle of milk. Then she carried the feeding baby into her room. After she changed her diapers she decided to creep back into bed with the infant bundled up beside her. Soon she was lulled by the breathing of the baby, light as the April rain outside, smelling of sweet violets. She could not cheat herself of this moment of peaceful rest with the fragrant breath of the baby on her cheek, any more than she could deprive herself of her lover's arms. If this were her last day to live, at least it would begin in beauty. The love now within her was met not only by Idriz' tender lovemaking but also by his physical presence of love within the world of hatred around them. It made life worth living and dying. This man was her cup of life, filled for her by Allah, a cup that she would drain. And cherish. Maxhide and the quiet baby fell asleep.

April 9, 1999

Craig Davis sat on Amina's cot in the field hospital. He looked down at her soundless, moving lips. He saw the pallor of her fair skin, the circles around her eyes, and the fine bone structure of her face. He worried because he could see the creeping signs of death, a blue and bruised look about her temples and in the hollows of her eye sockets. The Kosovar in the next cot was staring at him when he took her hand to his lips and kissed it. Her soul, Craig thought, is trapped below a layer of ice. She opened her eyes and stared at the milky tent ceiling. He noticed that her eyes had faded to an opaque fawn color.

"Is she your relative," the man in the next cot asked. Craig looked over at him and smiled. Ah, the man spoke English. Maybe he could find out something from him about Amina. He decided to try.

"Well, I feel like she is. I saw her yesterday in the crowd. Where's her baby?" the man frowned.

"It must have died already. I think she rambled on about two dead children. She keeps saying, over and over, that she has nothing to live for, that her whole family is gone. She has spoken of her husband shot—she keeps reliving that. She also repeats the separation from her young daughter at the busses, and now I guess the baby is gone too. It too must have died."

"It looks like she will get her wish soon. Why don't they bring water? Craig went to find the medic.

"Please bring this woman an IV. She is so dehydrated; she looks near death to me. Please hurry."

"There aren't any IV tubes available at Brazda yet," answered the young man. "The convoys may bring them today or tonight. Of course, that may be too late for this woman. You are right, she may die."

"What if I tried to help her to drink water?" Craig asked. "I was able to get her to drink some yesterday."

"I'll bring some bottles and you can try." A few minutes later, Craig sat on the bed and held Amina in his arms. He opened the bottle and tried to pour some into her mouth, but she let it dribble down her chest. He looked up in dismay at the medic, who shook his head and gently mopped up the water with a towel.

"There is no point in trying to help her, as she has lost the will to live. She won't last long now."

“Do you know anything about her children? Apparently she spoke endlessly about the loss of her whole family.”

“When she was brought into the field hospital, she was carrying a dying infant; it was too late.”

“Was she conscious when the baby was taken from her?”

“Yes. She tried to hold onto her; we had to force her to let go. Did you wish to see her? Do you know this family?” The medic sat down suddenly on the folded cardboard cartons that covered the earth beneath the tent roof.

“No, the family is like the other Ethnic Albanian Kosovar families, with dead husbands, mothers and children,” Craig added, “who die despite everything we can do.” Maybe because of much that we have done, he added to himself. “I hear that the ones who got out before the borders closed, are the lucky ones. Those inside face dangers greater than death. All the while Craig was holding the inert form of Amina.

She was still breathing. Her eyes were sunken, closed, ringed with long, black eyelashes that adorned her pale cheeks with womanly beauty even now as she lay dying. Craig held her tenderly, his mind thinking that she should live, while his heart accepted that her soul would depart. A prolonged life for Amina would only extend the icy hell into which she had been thrown.

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Ronald Deale stood outside the Brazda tent city, near the border which had opened for a few hours to let in a line of refugees. Beside him stood Idriz. The cameras began to film the interview.

“Idriz Berisha, yeasterday you were seen opening the gate against orders to let pass a man and his baby. Why did you do it?” Between cloud patches, sunlight spotted the trees behind the tents and a cold wind blew intermittently.

“I did it to save the baby’s life. I heard the baby’s father tell his cousin across the wire that the baby had started a respiratory condition.” Idriz straightened his shoulders and stared intently into the camera.

“After all,” he added, “the purpose of the Rescue Mission is to save lives. The Macedonians, all of them clearly understand that. Orders to open and to close the border occur without explanation.

See for yourself. Right now they are open and the guards are letting the refugees come as we speak." He pointed to the lines behind them.

"Yes, I can see that," Deale said, speaking into the microphone himself. "But, weren't you worried about the cost of your decision? What has happened as a result?" He held the microphone under the mouth of Idriz.

"Well, I have been ordered to appear before the military court in a few hours. Later, I can tell you more."

"I think it's worth another interview," said Deale to the international viewers, "to see the result of a direct attempt to save two individual lives, in the middle of this massive rescue work. We'll keep you posted on the outcome." Idriz turned away, silent in his knowledge that more than one baby had influenced his decision. He recalled Maxhide's beautiful creamy skin, and prayed that Allah would allow them to be together once more.

Inside the headquarters of the High Commisioner for the NATO Relief Effort, a woman turned from the televsion to her subordinates. She was one of the highest ranking NATO officials. She had seen the interview, and she requested that the military commander of the Macedonian troops be brought to her. A few minutes later, she told the general of the television interview and the one to follow. She reminded him that the public relations of the Macedonian soldiers had been poor. Many of the soldiers, sympathetic to the Serbs in Kosovo, had treated the refugees with brutality. She emphasized the symbolic value of Idriz Berisha and stated that it would be in the interests of the Macedonian military to treat his case with care. Of course, she added, some disciplinary action must be taken, as he had disobeyed orders, but could not a dishonorable discharge substitute for prison in this case? The general agreed and left to issue the orders. Later that afternoon, Idriz met Ronald Deale and Craig Davis. He shook hands with Ronald and thanked the men for their intervention. His own story, he said, was one of the few with a happy closure. No one knew then that Gani's father would survive and would locate him because of the publicity provided by the media. NATO Rescue Worker Craig Davis, thankful for Idriz but picturing in his heart the face of the beautiful, fragile Amina who lay dying, extended his hand with a sad smile. It was too late for Amina and her children.

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