
“An apology would mean peace of mind, in a way”

The story of Stella Aguilar.

By Joshua Wheeler (Text) and [Reto Sterchi](#) (Photo), 16.10.2021



Stella Aguilar.

Stella was 10 years old when the bomb exploded, living in the village of La Luz, 60 miles from Trinity. Her father was off fighting the war so it was just her mother caring for Stella and her three younger siblings. “The only thing

I can remember is that the house was shaking real funny. My mom jumped out of bed and I followed her. We were looking out the kitchen window. The whole sky looked red. I thought it was a fire but my mom said it was not a fire.”

“We raised most of the vegetables on our land. We had a lot of fruit and chickens. The milk that we drank was from one of our neighbors that had a cow.”

Stella’s mother and aunt both developed enlarged thyroids at a young age. Stella eventually had a tumor on her thyroid. Her daughter currently takes medication for her thyroid and her grandson was born without any thyroid at all. Stella’s sister, who was 7 when the bomb went off, died from cancer, as did Stella’s husband who was raised in Tularosa and was 14 when the bomb went off. “The compensation money wouldn’t have paid for even one month of healthcare for my husband. But if the government were to acknowledge or apologize, I think it would mean peace of mind, in a way.”