

14-Year-Old Girl Shot For Going To School in Pakistan- Article

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/2012/10/14-year-old-girl-shot-for-going-to-school-in-pakistan/>

Malala Yousafzai, a 14-year-old Pakistani schoolgirl who dared to speak out against a ban on female education, was shot in the head by gunmen who stopped a school van and asked for her by name.



Pakistani doctors removed a bullet from 14-year-old's Malala's head. The Taliban shot the child campaigner in a horrific attack condemned by national leaders and human rights activists.

Reports say a masked man stopped the school van in the Swat Valley, a beautiful mountainous part of Pakistan where extremist Islamic militants affiliated with the Taliban have been fighting for control.

Another gunman jumped in the rear of the van asking for Malala and as the driver tried to speed away, he shot her and escaped. Three other students survived.

Doctors have successfully removed the bullet from Yousafzai's head, but she remains in critical condition.

Her father, an educator and a member of a local peace Jirga tribal council, told reporters that "She is all right.... Please pray for her early recovery and health."

Who shot Malala?

Various extremist groups that unite under an umbrella organization known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), or the Pakistani Taliban, have bombed hundreds of schools in the tribal regions and in the Swat Valley.

In 2007, the TTP ruled the area with an iron fist, destroying non-religious schools and setting up independent courts that administered a harsh interpretation of Islamic law.

Taliban militants specifically targeted Yousafzai for her work to encourage women's education and rights.

Three years ago, Yousafzai won international recognition for writing a blog about her experiences for the British Broadcasting Corporation. In her diary, Yousafzai chronicled life in the Swat Valley under the brutal rule of the Taliban, who carried out public floggings, hung dead bodies in the streets and threatened families that allowed their girls to go to school.



In recent years, nearly 460 schools have been damaged or destroyed in the tribal regions.

Malala's diary described injustice

In one entry, she wrote: "On my way from school to home I heard a man saying, 'I will kill you.' I hastened my pace and after a while I looked back if the man was still coming behind me. But to my utter relief he was talking on his mobile and must have been threatening someone else."

In 2011, Malala was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize for the blog she wrote under a pseudonym to protect her identity. She also received the National Peace Prize in Pakistan, had a school named after her and quickly became an outspoken critic of the Taliban in Pakistan. She began writing the diary for the BBC when she was just 11.

Read her blog in its entirety here.

Taliban says she is a target because she is a "Western-minded girl"

A spokesman for the Pakistani Taliban, Ehsanullah Ehsan, said the Islamist group carried out the attack after repeatedly warning Malala to stop speaking out.

“She is a Western-minded girl. She always speaks against us. We will target anyone who speaks against the Taliban,” he said by telephone from an undisclosed location, according to the New York Times.

Ehsan added that if she survived, the Taliban will try again to kill her.

“Even adults didn’t have a vision like hers”

Pakistan’s prime minister and U.S. officials condemned the attack.

“We have to fight the mindset that is involved in this. We have to condemn it,” Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf told the Pakistani Senate. “Malala is like my daughter and yours, too. If that mindset prevails, then whose daughter would be safe?”

Pakistan’s top military official, Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, called the shooting “inhuman” and a “heinous act of terrorism.”

Kayani quoted the Prophet Muhammad: “The one who is not kind to children, is not amongst us.”

Documentary filmmaker Samar Minallah, who worked with women in the region, told the Times that Malala “symbolizes the brave girls of Swat.”

“She knew her voice was important, so she spoke up for the rights of children. Even adults didn’t have a vision like hers.”

– Compiled by Thaisi H. Da Silva and Allison McCartney for NewsHour Extra