

Malala Yousafzai



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.

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

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 group, 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 organization known as the Pakistani Taliban, have bombed hundreds of schools in the tribal regions and in the Swat Valley. In 2007, the Taliban ruled the area with an **iron fist**, destroying non-religious schools and setting up religious courts that punished people with **harsh** interpretations of Islamic law.

Taliban militants specifically **targeted** Yousafzai for her work to encourage women's education and rights. A spokesman for the Pakistani Taliban 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 to the New York Times. He added that if she **survived**, the Taliban will try again to kill her.

Pakistan's prime minister and U.S. officials condemned the attack. Pakistan's top General Kayani, called the shooting "inhuman" and a "act of terrorism." Kayani quoted the Prophet Muhammad: "The one who is not kind to children, is not amongst us."

Mission and Work

Soon after her recovery, she gave a speech to the United Nations, published her first book called, *I Am Malala*, and co-founded the Malala Fund, a non-profit organization. Yousafzai was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013 and won the award in 2014. She was the youngest person to ever receive the Nobel Peace Prize. She shared the award with another children's rights activist.

Glossary

Dare—v—(air—dare) to be brave enough to do something dangerous or risky

Ban—n—a prohibition, a law against doing something

Bullet—n—(BULL-it) a round piece of metal that a gun shoots

Condemn—v—(cun-DEM) to say very strongly that you think something is wrong

Masked—adj—(maskt) a person using something to cover his face, to hide his identity

Recovery—n—(ru-CUV-ur-ee) to return to health after being sick

Harsh—adj—unkind, cruel, strict

Rule with an iron fist—(pool—rule; l-rn) expression—when an authority controls people extremely strictly and punishes hard

Target—v—(TAR-git) to plan to attack someone or something

Warning—n—to tell someone that something bad or dangerous might happen

Speak out—v—to say publicly what you think about something, especially as a protest

Western-minded—adj—(MIN-did) to have ideas about freedom and democracy as we think in the U.S. and Europe

Survive—v—(sir-VIV) to continue to live, especially in a dangerous situation

Vocabulary Practice

<i>dare</i>	<i>recovery</i>	<i>ban</i>	<i>bullet</i>	<i>masked</i>	<i>condemned</i>
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1. You can see the bullet that killed President Lincoln at the museum.
2. Her husband was so mean, she didn't _____ disobey him because she could be hit.
3. A _____ man came into the liquor store and robbed it.
4. The high school decided to _____ baggy jeans because students could hide weapons in them.
5. The president _____ the shooting at the movie theater in Colorado. He said it was time to change our gun laws.
6. She was in a terrible car accident. Her _____ took 6 months.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. How old was Malala when she was shot? _____
2. Why was she shot? _____
3. Where was she when she was shot? _____
4. Who shot her? _____

5. How many schools have the Taliban bombed? _____
 6. What did Malala Yousafzai win before she was shot? _____
 7. Did Pakistan's prime minister support or condemn the Taliban? _____
 8. What did the Prophet Muhammad say about how Muslims should treat children?
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