



## **Malala Yousafzai speaks exclusively to BBC World News' *Panorama* in her first interview since she was attacked by the Taliban**

**Programme to air Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October and Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October on BBC World News**

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October: Last year, Malala Yousafzai was shot in the head by the Taliban on her way home from school in Pakistan's Swat Valley.

Speaking exclusively to Mishal Husain for BBC World News' *Panorama* in her first interview since the attack, Malala says she believes dialogue is the only way to achieve peace and that extremism can only be rooted out by educating the next generation.

She also told the BBC that she intends to return to her home country, despite the danger:

"I want to go back to Pakistan but first of all I need to be fully empowered... and to make myself powerful, I only need one thing, that is education, so I will get education, then I'll go back to Pakistan.."

The interview, in which she also reflects on life under the Taliban, the attack itself and her battle for recovery in a Birmingham hospital, will be broadcast in a *Panorama* exclusive 'Malala: Shot for Going to School' on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October, at 15:10 and Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 09:10 and 21:10 AEDT on BBC World News.

Key quotes from the interview are below. If you use any of this material, please credit BBC Panorama and 'Malala: Shot for Going to School'.

Malala Yousafzai grew up in Pakistan's Swat Valley – a region which had a proud record on education. She inherited those values but she was also born into a society that didn't value daughters.

"When I was born, some of our relatives came to our house and told my mother, don't worry, next time you will have a son" Malala told Mishal, when they met in Birmingham. "For my brothers it was easy to think about the future, they can be anything they want. But for me it was hard and for that reason, I wanted to become educated and I wanted to empower myself with knowledge..."

From the day she was born, Malala's father Ziauddin was her mentor and biggest supporter. He told Panorama: "I accepted her as an individual. I did not treat her as a property. I honoured her as a free individual and I usually tell all parents all over the world – educate your daughters, they are amazing."

But by 2008, the Taliban were in full control of the Swat Valley and started broadcasting threats and orders over the radio. One particular edict was to change Malala's life - after 15<sup>th</sup> January 2008, girls would be no longer be allowed to attend school.

"The Taliban's punishments were like slaughtering people on the Green Chowk, throwing acid on women's faces or abusing them or killing them" said Malala.

The Green Chowk or Green Square junction in Malala's home town of Mingora became the centre of Taliban atrocities.

“I was afraid of my future. And at that time there was fear all around us, in every street and in every square of Mingora. At that time I said if we want to fight against the fear, let us have courage and let us have power to speak up”

Malala’s father, Ziauddin was an anti-Taliban activist and one of the few people who would risk speaking to Western journalists. He had been approached by the BBC to find a schoolgirl to write an online diary. No one else would come forward, so he volunteered Malala.

She also agreed to do a live interview with Pakistan’s top news reporter, even though the Taliban were in control of the area. Over the next two years, she would become a regular on Pakistani television, campaigning hard for girls’ education.

“Becoming public meant everyone would listen to you then. That’s the simple reason that I spoke”. She said.

Her father Ziauddin reflected on the risk Malala was taking: “We know the Taliban strikes hundreds of schools but they never targeted a child. They flogged adult girls but they never killed children. We really didn’t expect because we thought that they might have some values, terrorists might have some code of conduct” he said.

“First I thought that they would only target my father”, recalls Malala “because my father was also a social activist... When I also heard about the threats from the Taliban, I used to think that a Talib would come and he would shoot you, Malala, in the street.”

On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012, Malala’s fears came true and she was attacked by the Taliban on her way home from school. She spoke to Mishal about the day of the attack:

“We were having exams that week and the paper on 9<sup>th</sup> October went very well, it was Pakistan studies, but the paper one day before was of physics. I love physics but it was hard.”

At 3pm, like any other day, she and her friends took the bus home from school. “I love to go on foot”, she explained, “but my mother told me you must not go on foot now and you must go in a bus so then you will be safe.”

“I was just talking to Moniba and having a gossip... everything seemed as normal part of life.... But when we went just further, I could see that there was no one at that time. And then I don’t remember what happened.”

Although Malala doesn’t remember the attack itself, her friends Shazia, Moniba and Kainat recall the events well. They spoke to Mishal when she visited the Swat valley for Panorama and recalled how two boys boarded their school bus as it slowed down to navigate a bend in the road on the way to Malala’s home.

“One of them came round the back and asked: Who is Malala Yousafzai?” said Shazia.

“She was very scared at the time, she didn’t say anything”, Moniba added.

“Then he fired straight at her. I saw a lot of blood on Malala’s head. When I saw that blood, I fell unconscious” said Kainat.

“My clothes, my shoes, my socks, my pouch, my books, all was just full of blood” said Moniba. “Malala’s blood.”

Malala was brought to the local hospital in a critical condition and her father rushed to her bedside.

“I have pictures still in my mind” said Malala. “In one picture, suddenly I see my father on my left side and when I look at him, I just tell him something and then I just close my eyes and everything gets dark. I thought I’m dead.”

Within an hour and a half, Malala was airlifted to a Military Hospital in the nearest city, Peshawar, where she underwent a major operation which involved removing part of Malala’s skull to release pressure on her brain.

Two British doctors were visiting Pakistan at the time and were asked to assess Malala’s condition. They spoke to Panorama about the care Malala was receiving and the decision to fly her to the UK to Birmingham’s intensive care unit at Queen Mary’s Hospital.

“I think the operation was the thing that really saved her life. So I was happy from that perspective. I wasn’t as happy with the post-operative intensive care that she was receiving,” said Javid Kayani, a consultant in emergency medicine.

“I went in and asked to wash my hands, and there was one sink and the tap didn’t work so that shocked me. I remember my words well. I said she’s salvageable, she’s had the right operation at the right time but the quality of her intensive care is compromising her outcome” said Dr Fiona Reynolds, a paediatric intensive care specialist.

As soon as Malala’s condition improved, she was airlifted to Birmingham, where the two British doctors were based. She arrived in an induced coma and awoke the next morning alone.

“I could not realise which country it is but I could see that the people were speaking English... and I said this is not Pakistan at least”, Malala recalled.

With a respirator tube in her throat, Malala was initially unable to talk. She was concerned for the welfare of her father, as she worried that he may also have been a target, and began to communicate with the doctors in writing.

“Here I have written why I have no father because I used to ask these questions from every nurse and doctor and every time they would say don’t worry” she said. “Then I have written my father have no money. I was also worried about the money that he would pay for me.”

Ten days after her arrival, Malala’s family joined her and over the next four months, Malala had two major operations to reconstruct her face, and a cochlear implant was inserted to restore her hearing in her left ear.

In March 2013, Malala began attending Edgbaston School for Girls in Birmingham and started settling into her new life.

Asked whether she thought British girls took their education for granted, she said: “Yes I believe that, and I want to tell the students of UK to think that it is very precious, it’s very prestigious, go to school. Reading a book, having a pen in our hands, studying, sitting in a classroom is something very special for us because once we were deprived from it and because what we have seen in Swat”.

She also explained that she misses her old school and friends in Pakistan: "Here they consider me as a good girl, the girl who stood up for children's rights and the girl who was shot by the Taliban. They never look at me as Malala, as their friend, and as a normal girl. In Pakistan I was just Malala, simply Malala."

In July, she spent her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday at the UN, where she made her first speech since being shot by the Taliban. At the time, a Taliban Commander also wrote to Malala admitting they had shot her but accusing her of speaking out against them and Islam.

"I felt nothing just sad, like, it's nice to hear from them because they accepted that yes we have shot Malala because so many people say that Malala has not been shot. It was a good thing to hear yes, they accept it."

"I think that the best way to solve problem and to fight against war is through dialogue, but for me the best way to fight against terrorism and extremism... just simple thing, educate the next generation."

Since her speech, there has been mounting criticism in her own country of her close relationship with the West.

"No, I'm not becoming Western, I'm still following my Pashtun culture and I'm wearing a shalvar kamiz, a dupatta on my head. And I believe that Islam is a true religion and it teaches us how to be patient and how to tolerate other religions and it teaches us about peace. Islam means peace".

"I don't know why people have divided the whole world into two groups, west and east. Education is neither eastern nor western, education is education and it's the right of every human being."

It was this attitude and her continued bravery in her campaigning which has seen her be the youngest person ever nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

"If I win Nobel Peace Prize, it would be a great opportunity for me, but if I don't get it, it's not important because my goal is not to get Nobel Peace Prize, my goal is to get peace and my goal is to see education of every child."

Ends.

#### **Notes to Editors:**

'Malala: Shot for Going to School' airs Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October at 15:10 and Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 09:10 and 21:10 AEDT on BBC World News. Additional extracts of the interview will be broadcast on BBC World News throughout the week.

BBC News has partnered with America's ABC News to tell Malala's story to a worldwide audience.

Pictures are available upon request.

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