

Malala Yousafzai



Born:12 July 1997, Mingora, Swat Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Education:Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, University of Oxford (2020)

Known for:Advocacy for girls' education, Human rights activism

Award: National Youth Peace Prize (Pakistan, 2011), Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought (EU, 2013), Nobel Peace Prize (2014), Honorary Canadian Citizenship (2017), Gleitsman Activist Award (2018).

Position: Co-founder of Malala Fund

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Malala yousafzai title can be described as the youngest Nobel Prize laureate in history, the second Pakistani and the only Pashtun to receive a Nobel Prize.[7] Yousafzai is a human rights advocate for the education of women and children in her native homeland, Swat, where the Pakistani Taliban had at times banned girls from attending school. Her advocacy has grown into

an international movement, and according to former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, she has become Pakistan's "most prominent citizen."

Early Life

Malala Yousafzai was born on 12 July 1997 in Mingora, Swat Valley, Pakistan. Her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, is an educator and activist who founded the Khushal Girls High School and College. Growing up in a region that later came under Taliban influence, Malala was inspired by her father's activism and developed a passion for learning and advocating for girls' education. She was also inspired by her father's thoughts and humanitarian work. In early 2009, when she was 11, she wrote a blog under her pseudonym Gul Makai for the BBC Urdu to detail her life during the Taliban's occupation of Swat.

Activism Under Taliban Rule

In 2009, at the age of 11, Malala began writing a blog under the pseudonym "Gul Makai" for BBC Urdu, detailing her life under Taliban rule and her desire to continue her education. Her writings highlighted the challenges faced by girls in accessing education in Swat Valley. NobelPrize.org As her profile rose, Malala and her father became prominent advocates for girls' education in Pakistan, leading to increased recognition and, unfortunately, threats from the Taliban.

Assassination Attempt and Recovery

On 9 October 2012, while on a bus in Swat District after taking an exam, Yousafzai and two other girls were shot by a Taliban gunman in an assassination attempt targeting her for her activism; the gunman fled the scene. She was struck in the head by a bullet and remained unconscious and in critical condition at the Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, but her condition later improved enough for her to be transferred to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, UK. After her recovery, Yousafzai became a more prominent activist for the right to education. Based in Birmingham, she co-founded the Malala Fund, a non-profit organisation, with Shiza Shahid. In 2013, she co-authored *I Am Malala*, an international best seller. In 2013, she received the Sakharov Prize, and in 2014, she was the co-recipient of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize with Kailash Satyarthi of India. Aged 17 at the time, she was the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate. In 2015, she was the subject of the Oscar-shortlisted documentary *He Named Me Malala*. In 2017 she was awarded honorary Canadian citizenship and became the youngest person to address the House of Commons of Canada.

Education

From March 2013 to July 2017, Yousafzai was a pupil at the all-girls Edgbaston High School in Birmingham. In August 2015, she received 6 A*s and 4 As at GCSE level. At A-Level, she studied Geography, History, Mathematics and Religious Studies. Also applying to Durham University, the University of Warwick and the London School of Economics (LSE), Yousafzai was interviewed at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford in December 2016 and received a conditional offer of three As in her A-Levels; in August 2017, she was accepted to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE). In February 2020, climate change activist Greta Thunberg travelled to Oxford University to meet Yousafzai. On 19 June 2020, Yousafzai said after passing her final examinations that she had completed her PPE degree at Oxford; she graduated with honours.

Malala Day

On 12 July 2013, Yousafzai's 16th birthday, she spoke at the UN to call for worldwide access to education. The UN dubbed the event "Malala Day". Yousafzai wore one of Benazir Bhutto's shawls to the UN. It was her first public speech since the attack, leading the first ever Youth Takeover of the UN, with an audience of over 500 young education advocates from around the world. The terrorists thought they would change my aims and stop my ambitions, but nothing changed in my life except this: weakness, fear and hopelessness died. Strength, power and courage was born ... I am not against anyone, neither am I here to speak in terms of personal revenge against the Taliban or any other terrorist group. I'm here to speak up for the right of education for every child. I want education for the sons and daughters of the Taliban and all terrorists and extremists. Yousafzai received several standing ovations. Ban Ki-moon, who also spoke at the session, described her as "our hero". Yousafzai also presented the chamber with "The Education We Want", a Youth Resolution of education demands written by Youth for Youth, in a process co-ordinated by the UN Global Education First Youth Advocacy Group, telling her audience: Malala day is not my day. Today is the day of every woman, every boy and every girl who have raised their voice for their rights. The Pakistani government did not comment on Yousafzai's UN appearance, amid a backlash against her in Pakistan's press and social media.

Nobel Peace Prize

on 10 October 2014, at the age of 17, Malala was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Indian children's rights activist Kailash Satyarthi. She became the youngest-ever Nobel laureate. The award recognized their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education. She is the second Pakistani to receive a Nobel Prize after 1979 Physics laureate Abdus Salam. After she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, there was praise, but also some disapproval of the decision. A Norwegian jurist, Fredrik Heffermehl, commented on being awarded the Nobel Prize: "This is not for fine people who have done nice things and are glad to receive it. All of that is irrelevant. What Nobel wanted was a prize that promoted global disarmament.

Women's clothing, marriage

Yousafzai had said that she did not understand why people had to marry. After her own marriage in 2021 she said that she had not been against marriage, but had concerns about it related to child marriage and forced marriage, and unequal marriages where "women make more compromises than men". In her own marriage she felt that she had found a person who understood her values. On 7 March 2022, Malala Yousafzai advocated for every woman's right to decide to wear what she likes for herself, from a burqa to a bikini: "Come and talk to us about individual freedom and autonomy, about preventing harm and violence, about education and emancipation. Do not come with your wardrobe notes." According to Yousafzai, "refusing to let girls go to school in their hijabs is horrifying".

Personal life

On 9 November 2021, Yousafzai married Asger Malik, a manager with the Pakistan Cricket Board, in Birmingham. She is a supporter of Birmingham City. Yousafzai is a practising Sunni Muslim. In an interview with Muslim Girl, she stated, "[The Islamic] faith has always been a big part of my life – and it continues to be so today." She has also defended her practice of wearing a shayla.

Criticism

On 7 August 2019, following the Indian revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, Yousafzai urged the UN to help Kashmiri children go safely back to school in response to the Indian Government's lockdown and communications blackout in the Kashmir valley and expressed her concern about the situation, and appealed to the international community to ensure peace in Jammu and Kashmir. People in India accused her of spreading the "Pakistani agenda" over the Kashmir conflict, and being selective in condemning human rights abuses, while in Pakistan she was criticised for being late in her response. After the start of Gaza–Israel conflict in October 2023, Yousafzai drew criticism for being silent over Israel's onslaught on Gaza and her "hypocritical" support statement about the conflict. She was condemned by Pakistani authors Nida Kirmani and Mehr Tarar over a Broadway musical she co-produced with former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who had rejected calls for ceasefire in Gaza. After a severe backlash, Yousafzai reaffirmed her support for people of Gaza and called for a ceasefire.

Works

Yousafzai's memoir *I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*, co-written with British journalist Christina Lamb, was published in October 2013 by Little, Brown and Company in the US and by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in the UK.[209] Fatima Bhutto, reviewing the book for *The Guardian* called the book "fearless" and stated that "the haters and conspiracy theorists would do well to read this book", though she criticised "the stiff, know-it-all voice of a foreign correspondent" that is interwoven with Yousafzai's.[210] Marie Arana for *The Washington Post* called the book "riveting" and wrote "It is difficult to imagine a chronicle of a war more moving, apart from perhaps the diary of Anne Frank." [211] Tina Jordan in *Entertainment Weekly* gave the book a "B+", writing "Malala's bravely eager voice can seem a little thin here, in *I Am Malala*, likely thanks to her co-writer, but her powerful message remains undiluted."

A children's edition of the memoir was published in 2014 under the title *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World*. According to *Publishers Weekly*, in 2017 the book had sold almost 2 million copies, and there were 750,000 copies of the children's edition in print. Yousafzai was the subject of the 2015 documentary *He Named Me Malala*, which was shortlisted for the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. In 2020, an Indian Hindi-language biographical film *Gul Makai* by H. E. Amjad Khan was released, with Reem Sameer Shaikh portraying her. Yousafzai authored a picture book, *Malala's Magic Pencil*, which was illustrated by Kerascoët and published on 17 October 2017. By March 2018, *The Bookseller* reported that the book had over 5,000 sales in the UK. In a review for *The Guardian*, Imogen Carter describes the book as "enchanted", opining that it "strikes just the right balance" between "heavy-handed" and "heartfelt", and is a "welcome addition to the frustratingly small range of children's books that feature BAME central characters". Rebecca Gurney of *The Daily Californian* gives the book a grade of 4.5 out of 5, calling it a "beautiful account of a terrifying but inspiring tale" and commenting "Though the story begins with fantasy, it ends starkly grounded in reality."

Awards and honours

National and international honours, listed by the date *2011: International Children's Peace Prize (nominee)

*2011: National Youth Peace Prize

*January 2012: Anne Frank Award for Moral Courage

*October 2012: Sitara-e-Shujaat, Pakistan's second-highest civilian bravery award

*November 2012: Foreign Policy magazine top 100 global thinker

*December 2012: Time magazine Person of the Year shortlist for 2012

*November 2012: Mother Teresa Awards for Social Justice

*December 2012: Rome Prize for Peace and Humanitarian Action

*January 2013: Top Name in Annual Survey of Global English in 2012

- *January 2013: Simone de Beauvoir Prize
- *March 2013: Memminger Freiheitspreis 1525 (conferred on 7 December 2013 in Oxford)
- *March 2013: Doughty Street Advocacy award of Index on Censorship
- *March 2013: Fred and Anne Jarvis Award of the UK National Union of Teachers
- *April 2013: Vital Voices Global Leadership Awards, Global Trailblazer
- *April 2013: One of Time's "100 Most Influential People in the World"
- *May 2013: Premi Internacional Catalunya Award of Catalonia, May 2013
- *June 2013: Annual Award for Development of the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)
- *June 2013: International Campaigner of the Year, 2013 Observer Ethical Awards
- *August 2013: Tipperary International Peace Award for 2012, Ireland Tipperary Peace Convention
- *2013: Portrait of Yousafzai by Jonathan Yeo displayed at National Portrait Gallery, London
- *September 2013: Ambassador of Conscience Award from Amnesty International
- *2013: International Children's Peace Prize
- *2013: Clinton Global Citizen Awards from Clinton Foundation
- *September 2013: Harvard Foundation's Peter Gomes Humanitarian Award from Harvard University
- *2013: Anna Politkovskaya Award – Reach All Women in War
- *2013: Reflections of Hope Award – Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum
- *2013: Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought – awarded by the European Parliament
- *2013: Honorary Master of Arts degree awarded by the University of Edinburgh
- *2013: Pride of Britain (October)
- *2013: Glamour magazine Woman of the Year
- *2013: GG2 Hammer Award at GG2 Leadership Awards (November)
- *2013: International Prize for Equality and Non-Discrimination
- *2014: Awarded the World Children's Prize also known as Children's Nobel Prize
- *2014: Awarded Honorary Life Membership by the PSEU (Ireland)
- *2014: Skoll Global Treasure Award
- *2014: Honorary Doctor of Civil Law, University of King's College, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- *2014: 2014 Nobel Peace Prize, shared with Kailash Satyarthi
- *2014: Philadelphia Liberty Medal
- *2014: Asia Game Changer Award
- *2014: One of Time Magazine "The 25 Most Influential Teens of 2014"
- *2014: Honorary Canadian citizenship
- *2015: Asteroid 316201 Malala named in her honour.
- *2015: The audio version of her book I Am Malala wins Grammy Award for Best Children's Album.
- *2016: Honorary President of The Students' Union of the University of Sheffield
- *2016: Order of the Smile
- *2017: Youngest ever United Nations Messenger of Peace
- *2017: Received honorary doctorate from the University of Ottawa
- *2017: Ellis Island International Medal of Honor
- *2017: Wonk of the Year 2017 from American University[278]
- *2017: Harper's Bazaar inducted Malala in the list of "150 of the most influential female leaders in the UK".[279][280]
- *2018: Advisor to Princess Zebunisa of Swat, Swat Relief Initiative Foundation, Princeton, New Jersey[281]
- *2018: Gleitsman Award from the Center for the Public Leadership at Harvard Kennedy School[282]
- *2019: For their first match of March 2019, the women of the United States women's national soccer team each wore a jersey with the name of a woman they were honoring, on the back; Carli Lloyd chose the name of Yousafzai.[283]
- *2022: Elected World's Children's Prize Decade Child Rights Hero.

Legacy of Malala Yousafzai

1. Global Symbol of Peaceful Resistance Malala became a global icon for peaceful resistance against oppression. Surviving a Taliban assassination attempt and responding not with hatred but with a renewed commitment to education and peace elevated her as a moral voice worldwide. Her message: “One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world” is quoted in global forums, classrooms, and parliaments alike. Her stance showed that nonviolence and education can be powerful weapons against extremism and ignorance.

2. Trailblazer for Girls’ Education Malala’s advocacy for 12 years of free, quality education for all girls globally changed the narrative in many countries where girls’ education is undervalued or denied. Through the Malala Fund, she has funded education projects in places like Pakistan, Nigeria, India, and Syria. She influenced global policy: her work has inspired legislation and funding commitments from governments and international organizations.

3. Youngest Nobel Peace Prize Laureate In 2014, at age 17, she became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, breaking barriers of age, gender, and geography. This recognition wasn’t just symbolic—it validated youth voices in international policy and diplomacy. Her Nobel Prize speech reminded the world that young people are capable of global leadership.

4. Role Model for Youth and Women Malala serves as a role model to young people, especially girls, who aspire to lead, speak out, and create change. She embodies how courage and conviction can transcend violence and fear. Many girls now refer to themselves as “Malalas” in countries where seeking education remains risky. **5. Literary and Cultural Influence** Her memoir, “I Am Malala”, has been translated into over 40 languages and included in school curricula around the world. It has helped educators teach resilience, global citizenship, and human rights. Documentaries and media about her life have also brought attention to issues affecting girls worldwide.

Famous Quotes

“One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world.”