

The Toronto Star's Editorial: 'Pakistan's daughter' Malala Yousafzai deserves Nobel Peace Prize!

Written by - The Toronto Star 's editorial-

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- November 14, 2012 - She has touched the hearts of millions, with her bold spirit and her liberating belief that girls everywhere have the right to an education. At age 11, as a child activist in Pakistan writing a blog for the British Broadcasting Corp., Malala Yousafzai defied the Taliban and denounced atrocities and oppression in the remote Swat Valley, her home. For years, she spoke up when others were cowed into silence. And when the Taliban could take no more and sent an assassin to shoot her in the head on her school bus on Oct. 9, hoping to silence her forever, she survived and battled back from a bullet that grazed her brain. At 15, Malala has become "Pakistan's daughter," an icon of courage and a beacon of hope for millions around the world. Today she is recovering in a British hospital. More than a million people have signed the I am Malala petition and others like it on behalf of the 32 million girls in Pakistan and elsewhere who have no access to schooling, reports Gordon Brown, the former British prime minister and United Nations special envoy for global education. The UN declared Nov. 10 Malala Day in her honour, to highlight the needs of school-age girls around the world. Because of her the Pakistani government is offering the families of poor children a small stipend to send them to primary school.

And thanks to a well-timed Canadian initiative, calls are mounting for Malala to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. More than 134,000 have signed a petition at Change.org. Signatories include interim federal Liberal Leader Bob Rae, federal Citizenship Minister Jason Kenney and the NDP's foreign affairs critic, Paul Dewar.

Few nominees more richly deserve Nobel recognition. The Peace Prize is awarded for promoting "fraternity between nations." Malala has done that, and more. She is an inspired voice for human dignity not only across borders, but also across cultures and generations.

This is a campaign Prime Minister Stephen Harper should support, on behalf of all Canadians, to give her spirit the tribute it deserves.

Despite Malala's fame, the Taliban continue to cast a dark shadow over Mingora, her home town. On Malala Day students at Khushal Public School, her school, were forced to honour her in private. They said prayers for her and lit candles behind closed doors. "I am still terrified," Kainaat Riaz, 16, told Agence France Presse. "I saw Malala in the pool of blood." But another student in a nearby school, Asma Khan, just 12, said Malala gave others "more courage to

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study and ... fulfill her mission to spread education everywhere." That bravery, and that mission, deserve nurturing.

Courtesy: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/article/1287844--pakistan-s-malala-yousafzai-deserves-nobel-for-defying-the-taliban>