

Give Afghans self-determination: Joya

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Afghan politician and human rights campaigner Malalai Joya ran secret schools for girls during the Taliban regime and is an outspoken critic of president Hamid Karzai and the US-led occupation.

Reporter: Emma Alberici, [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) , April 9, 2012

{youtube}NPQg2egMfBQ|450|278{/youtube}

Transcript

EMMA ALBERICI, PRESENTER: Time magazine has called her one of the world's 100 most influential people.

Malalai Joya is an Afghan politician and a human rights campaigner. Under the Taliban she operated secret underground schools providing an education for the country's girls.

She's an outspoken critic of Afghanistan's president Hamid Karzai and of the US-led occupation. But speaking out has come at a cost. There have been six attempts on her life. The most recent scare came just last month when gunman attacked her office in Kabul.

Malalai Joya is visiting Australia to address a public meeting in Sydney later this week.

Welcome to Lateline.

MALALAI JOYA, FORMER MEMBER OF AFGHAN PARLIAMENT: Thank you. Thanks for interview (inaudible).

EMMA ALBERICI: Tell us, you want troops out entirely from the country, but is the local

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military ready to take responsibility?

MALALAI JOYA: Um, 10 years ago US and NATO invaded our country under the fake banner of women rights, human rights and democracy, under the name of so-called War on Terror.

Unfortunately, they pushed us from the frying pan into the fire. They replaced terrorists Taliban with fundamentalists warlords who are brethren creed of the Taliban. And even nowadays they are talking about handing over the responsibility to the Afghan National Army and police, as I believe it is just like a trick that to use them as cannon fodders to decrease the number of their own soldier casualties.

In this 10 years of occupation the head of Afghan National Army and police was and is still the powerful warlords. And even with the uniform of the police, those militias belongs to these warlords and the civil war in the past be full of domination of the Taliban in different provinces of Afghanistan, kill people publicly.

And it's not in the agenda that Afghan people stand on their own feet because they occupied Afghanistan for their own original economic, political and military interest.

EMMA ALBERICI: But you would have to say that Afghanistan today is a better place, especially for women, than it was 10 years ago.

MALALAI JOYA: You know, not only woman, men and women of Afghanistan. The Taliban time, they had one enemy, but now they have, in this 10 years of occupation, almost 11, three enemies: warlords, Taliban and occupation forces. And unfortunately, in two years of the war during these decades of war, women was the most and first victims and still many violences against them.

Especially in faraway provinces, situation for woman is like hell, but catastrophic situation of woman was very good excuse for US and NATO to occupy our country, as now rape cases, domestic violences, acid attacks, burning the girls' schools, cutting the nose, fingers and ears of women and many other kind of different kind of inhuman violences increasing against woman

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day by day more.



EMMA ALBERICI: But this seems extraordinary when we hear that back in 2001 the average life expectancy for a woman in Afghanistan was 44. Now, some 10, 11 years later, it's 62.

You yourself were running an underground school that can now flourish in the open. Aren't you evidence yourself of the advancement of women in Afghanistan, the fact that you made it into the Parliament?

MALALAI JOYA: You know, I think alone my life story's enough to know the mockery of democracy and mockery of War on Terror in Afghanistan.

When you compare with the dark period of the Taliban, I was activist. It was risky on that time under burqa, but I was (inaudible) underground. But today, despite wearing burqa in public not safe, as you mentioned about these assassination attempts and also many other problems and obstacles that not only me, many other democratic-minded men and women, these activists that they are facing, especially woman, is still in most of provinces women are wearing this

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disgusting burqa just to be safe and alive. And also ...

EMMA ALBERICI: Women are wearing the burqa to hide, you mean?

MALALAI JOYA: Yes, to hide their identity, that do not be target. To - as they are active. And this disgusting burqa is a symbol of oppression, but today gives safety and life to millions of woman.

And even in Kabul by presence of tens of thousands troops, millions of Afghan men and women, they do not face security and they suffer from injustice, corruption, joblessness, poverty, etc.

And we - you mention about parliament. It is true in the Taliban time we didn't have parliament. But this 10 years of occupation, we have, but one of the most disgusting mafia parliament that we have. And election itself was corrupt. And our people use this famous saying, "It's not important who's voting, it's important who is counting." And majority seats of the parliament belongs to the warlords, stragglers, even to the Taliban.

EMMA ALBERICI: But you made it into parliament. I understand you were kicked out of the parliament in 2007. What were the circumstances?

MALALAI JOYA: The reason because I never sat silence there and I exposed the brutalities of these warlords who these 10 years they have had and still they have mask of democracy and now they are already negotiating with the terrorist Taliban as well. And I exposed their brutalities and there - because I was the small voice of the voiceless people of Afghanistan inside of this disgusting parliament telling the truth. And as I was woman, as well of course, they couldn't tolerate me as I never did compromise with them.

That's why like political conspiracy, they censor one of my interview and expelled me, which was quite illegal act. And despite national, international condemnation they did not allow me to go back to this mafia parliament.

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And I wanted to go back, the reason was to be there and not allow them to make easier this kind of disgusting laws against woman especially misogynist laws. And all the laws that today in Afghanistan these 10 years, we have this constitution, but unfortunately all these beautiful laws just on the papers. And if it was benefit for these bunch of killers, warlords who are in power, they will use it; otherwise they will look like a waste paper.

EMMA ALBERICI: You mentioned earlier that Afghanistan now has three enemies where before it only had one, the Taliban. You said the - now you have the Taliban, the warlords and the occupiers. You mean the US and its allies, Australia?

MALALAI JOYA: Of course ...

EMMA ALBERICI: Do you see Australia as an enemy?

MALALAI JOYA: Of course. Because in this 10 years of occupation, Australian Government, unfortunately they did not act independently. They followed the wrong policy of the US, which we believe is war crime. And tens of thousands of innocent civilians have been killed, most of them women and children, during these bloody wars and criminal war.

And even Australian Government goes to such extent that support criminal warlords like Matiullah Khan in Oruzgan Province that he is receiving \$340,000 per month from Australia Government, US government and other Western governments.

And they are the friends of the enemies of Afghan people who are great obstacles for the true democratic-minded elements in Afghanistan. And that's why we believe that this 10 years they just wasted the blood of their soldiers and also the attacks (inaudible).

EMMA ALBERICI: Many young Australian soldiers have died in Afghanistan.

MALALAI JOYA: Yes, condolences not enough to those families who lost their sons and

Give Afghans self-determination: Joya

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daughters in other country. And unfortunately their government send them for this criminal war for occupation. And they suffer - Australian family, US family, they should know that democracy never come by military invasion, by urinating the corpses of Afghan, by doing massacres, by bombing our wedding parties, what they did in Ingahar (phonetic spelling), in Nuristan.

And recently in Kandahar Province, these cruel American soldiers killed 16 innocent civilians, most of them women and children. And unfortunately, Australia Government follow and still they are following this war policy of the US and Afghanistan, and for our people there is no difference between the Australian troops or Italian troops or 40 other countries who under the name of NATO (inaudible) followed the criminal policy of the US in Afghanistan as they are there for their own (inaudible) agendas.

They want to change Afghanistan into their military base, an intelligence base into Asia.

EMMA ALBERICI: Well, I guess fundamentally they were hoping that democracy might have a chance to flourish, which you yourself say is your aim?

MALALAI JOYA: You know, the democracy, elementary meaning of democracy is government of people for people, but unfortunately this 10 years of occupation, enemies of Afghan people imposed on them, especially these misogynist terrorist elements. And day by day they are making disgusting laws especially against woman ...

EMMA ALBERICI: What's the alternative?

MALALAI JOYA: Yes, the alternative of course that first troops should withdraw, because ...

EMMA ALBERICI: What does that leave for Afghanistan? If you say there are warlords and Taliban, well, what else is there?

MALALAI JOYA: They must let Afghan to decide their own future or in another vote

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self-determination.

Also democratic-minded forces of Afghanistan are the only alternative that who are able to fight against fundamentalism and against terrorism and people trust them. And democracy without justice is meaningless. And those bunch of killers who committed crimes and did massacres and killed innocent civilians in Afghanistan, these decades of war, still they are in power with the mask of democracy.

People of Afghanistan want them that they should be - they must be brought to the national, International Criminal Court, and first of all they must be powerless. And these 10 years they shed the blood of innocent people of Afghanistan under the name of so-called War on Terror, but now US officials publicly, they confess that Taliban are not their enemies.

They are true that Taliban, warlords, Al-Qaeda, Osama and all these other terrorists, they are not their enemies and they are the enemies of Afghan people and they have been acknowledged and created by US Government and still support them for their own interest.

EMMA ALBERICI: But in every war there are casualties on both sides. It's just one of the unfortunate products of war, isn't it?

MALALAI JOYA: You know, war itself is enough that values like democracy, women rights, human rights is not - never coming by war. And you are mentioning that me as example, you know.

You know, by chance I'm alive. And many woman like me, many other activists, democratic-minded like me that - who are alive and still they are underground and facing these challenge, obstacles, risks, threats, and they are trying to build their countries.

If US and NATO let them a little bit (inaudible) peace. And those who come in our country for their own interest, they occupied. So that's why we believe that they are wasting the blood of their own soldiers, use them as a tool for their criminal war. That's why those troops who are in Afghanistan, they should learn from those brave troops who refuse to go in Afghanistan, Iraq in

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other countries that where these warmongers are waging wars. They says we don't want to be war criminal.

And, anyway, but they all - for example these troops who are going in Afghanistan, they are not the son or daughter of Julia Gillard or Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama. They have their own parents and I think this 10 years is enough for Australian justice-loving people, American peace-loving people in around the world that should know about this disgusting war and they should put pressure on their government that stop and end this criminal war as soon as possible, this occupation.

And please let Afghan people - again I stress in this comment that they should - they are the one that should get - decide about their own future. But no question that we need helping hand of justice-loving people around the world.

My message is this: that when we want the withdraw of the troops, but we are asking for the international solidarity of justice-loving, peace-loving people around the world. Millions who agree with us and they are against war, against occupation, they strongly believe in justice and peace. They must educationally support my people, that as education is a key against occupation and towards emancipation.

EMMA ALBERICI: Malalai Joya, I thank you so much for coming in. We'll have to leave it there.

MALALAI JOYA: Thank you. Thanks for interview.