

## **Malalai Joya, A Brave Woman Hero of Afghanistan**

Written by The Human Lens  
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By hqas, [The Human Lens](#) , March 20, 2014



**“I started working as an activist when I was very young, grade 8. When I started working amongst our people, especially women, it was so enjoyable for me. I learned a lot from them, even though they were not educated. I didn’t know anything about politics. I learned from people who were non-educated, non-political people who belonged to a political situation. I worked with different committees in the refugee camps. I remember that in every house that I went everyone had different stories of suffering. I remember one family we met. Their baby was just skin and bones. They could not afford to take the baby to a doctor, so they had to just wait for their baby to die. I believe that no movie maker, no writer is able to write about these tragedies that we have suffered. Not only in Afghanistan, but also Palestine, Iraq... the children of Afghanistan are like those children. They fight against enemies with only stones. These kinds of children are my heroes and my heroines.” – Malalai Joya – Afghanistan**

The thirty-five year old Afghani front liner activist, former politician and human rights advocate from Afghanistan is a “living nightmare” for the Afghani hardliners as well as the long list of democratic lot in respective offices at the White House, NATO, EU coalitions and elsewhere.

Don’t let her small stature fool, you, this Afghan activist is truly a towering figure. At the tender age of 25, she openly challenged her country’s notorious NATO-U.S – backed criminal warlords at the 2003 Constitutional Loya Jirga (popular assembly) in Kabul. She thundered “It is a mistake to test those already being tested. They should be taken to national and international

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court. Even if they are forgiven by our people, the bare-footed Afghan people, history will never forgive them," before her microphone was abruptly cut off.

Today, after a decade of narrowly escaping numerous assassination attempts as a result of that infamous public confrontation, she remains politically active underground and continues to call out the warlords. Her journey is discussed at length in her novel, *A Woman Amongst Warlords*.

Every time I think about her, I feel we need more Malalais to raise voices against injustices of the global politics. This extraordinary young woman who was raised in the refugee camps of Iran and Pakistan and having witnessed the first-hand sufferings of war, is adamant in her demands that the U.S. government immediately end its war.

**In her own words, “My country needs you to get the troops out. No nation can liberate another nation.”**

In her book, *A woman among Warlords*, she explains about her twofold struggle against fundamentalist oppression and foreign occupation. She slammed the notion that the occupation is helping Afghan women achieve their rights. She says “The United States has tried to justify its occupation with rhetoric about ‘liberating’ Afghan women, but we remain caged in our country.”

Joya is clear about the war’s goals, writing in her book, “This endless U.S.-led war on terror ... is in fact a war against the Afghan people.”

She yearns for a peace she has never known and risks her life each day to realize it.

If one is to think rationally, putting aside EAST-WEST divide, the reality is that American occupation had been marked by far too much blood. Indeed, according to Joya, “the atrocities of the occupation forces are not new for my people.” More over, the notion that keeping troops in Afghanistan is saving women is proved **WRONG**; when human rights advocates like Malalai continue to be threatened by the fundamentalists, the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

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In recent years, she has raised her voice against the deputation of some shady people into high-ranking positions in her country. Aust

Enter Matiullah Khan – a warlord who is now chief of police in Oruzgan province, and has been backed by US and Australia. She also brings to surface how Khan, a warlord is getting funding of \$340,000 each year from the Australian, US and other Western governments. She points that some of Matiullah Khan's fighters also receive military training in Australia.

Such outspokenness and open critique by Joya continues to ruffle quite many feathers in the West. Her message sits uncomfortably with both sections of the western population and their democratic ( ???) leaders for the continuation of this farcical war in Afghanistan. In 2011, she was initially denied visa to the US because of her frankness in critiquing the American war policies. However, after finally making it to the US, she told audiences that "I don't fear the threats I face; I fear remaining silent on these injustices."

At home turf, she continues to live a hidden and underground life and although married does not publicize her family's details for fear of security. She has escaped several assassination attempts at the hands of the Taliban and shady lots.

I do not know what will happen tomorrow, in Afghanistan or with Malalai. But what I do know is that I am at peace each time I see her during a public appearance; just at the fact that she is still alive and healthy.

She only wants justice for her people and her homeland.

Ultimately, she wants what we all want: peace.

I admire her determination and unwavering efforts for democracy. I find myself at a loss as how to salute her courage and bravery, but that does not deter me in expressing complete solidarity with Malalai Joya in her mission of a peaceful Afghanistan.