



THE SWAT VALLEY Malala is from Mingora, a city in the Swat Valley. The area is known for its green mountains, thick forests, and mighty rivers.

Taliban Control

The Taliban were not part of Pakistan's government, but their forces were powerful. Their members followed an **extreme** form of the religion Islam. Most Muslims—people who follow Islam—do not agree with the Taliban.

Malala is from Mingora, a city in the Swat Valley. Starting in 2007, the Taliban began taking control of Swat. They blew up government buildings and murdered police officers. At night, Malala often woke up to the

VOCABULARY

terrorists: people who use fear or violence to gain power

extreme: very far from agreeing with the opinions of most people

oppressive: very cruel or unfair

pseudonym: a name that someone (such as a writer) uses instead of his or her real name

crusade: a serious attempt to change something



FIGHTING TO SURVIVE Malala got better in a hospital in England. The bullet badly damaged her hearing and fractured—or cracked—her skull.

sound of gunfire. Mingora became a war zone.

Under Taliban control, people were forced to follow **oppressive** religious rules. All music, television, and movies were banned. Women were not allowed to go to school or do any work outside of the home.

If a person broke these rules, he or she could be beaten—or even killed.



PAUSE AND THINK: What happened in 2007 that changed life in Mingora?

Top Secret School

In January 2009, the Taliban ordered all girls' schools to close. That included Malala's school, which her father owned.

It was very upsetting news. School was one of the most important parts of Malala's life, and she knew how lucky she was. After all, fewer than half the girls who lived in Pakistan's