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Asia - Pakistan

Malala censored

Malala Yousafzai book launch censored in Peshawar

30 January 2014

Reporters Without Borders regrets that the launch of 16-year-old blogger **Malala Yousafzai's** memoir "I am Malala" at Peshawar University's Area Study Centre in northwestern Pakistan on 28 January was cancelled as a result of pressure from local officials, who cited security reasons.

"We deplore this politically-motivated manoeuvre, which violated freedom of information," said Benjamin Ismail, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific Desk.

"Claiming an inability to protect the book launch in order to prevent it taking place was totally specious. The provincial government's opinion of this book should be of no consequence and should certainly not result in any form of censorship. We hope the rescheduled event goes ahead without interference on 5 February."

The organizers were forced to cancel the book launch after the police told them that they were unable to provide security for the event.

Khadim Hussain, one of the organizers, said two members of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (of which Peshawar is the capital) – information minister Shah Farman and local government minister Inayatullah Rehman – intervened personally to prevent it going ahead.

On the day scheduled for the Malala book launch, the government said it did not oppose the event but rather the university's use by the organizers "for political ends."

The book's complete title is: "I am Malala: the story of the girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Taliban." Its author, who has written a blog on the *BBC Urdu* website since 2009, has lived in Britain with her family since the [October 2012 shooting](#).

Still threatened by the Taliban in Pakistan, Yousafzai had not been due to attend the launch, which was organized by the Bacha Khan Education Trust, an NGO called Strengthening Participatory Organization and the university's Area Study Centre.

Pakistan is ranked 159th out of 179 countries in the 2013 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).
