

## **Four Freedoms Awards acceptance speech by Malala Yousafzai**

Your Majesties, Royal Highnesses, Excellences, Honoured Laureates, members of the Roosevelt family, his excellency 'Moazzam Ahmad Khan' – ambassador of Pakistan, dear sisters and brothers.

I am humbled to be here today.

I am thankful to these incredible honourees who are campaigning to ensure that every person is entitled to basic human rights, no matter who you are, or where you are from.

I am here today to thank you all for awarding me with the medal for freedom from fear.

My family, the people of Pakistan and I know what real fear means.

I remember how the terrorists inflicted inhuman atrocities against the people of SWAT.

I remember how our schools were bombed and girls were banned from going to school.

I remember how the worshippers of God were brutally killed in mosques, churches and temples.

I remember how terrorists exploited the most vulnerable people in our society, the poor, the unemployed and the needy, and then recruited them and turned them into suicide bombers.

Dear sisters and brothers, when the Taliban struck in the valley of SWAT, they spread extreme terror throughout, slaughtering people, flogging girls, bombing schools and spreading hatred.

Hundreds and thousands of people were killed many of whom chose not to speak out because of the fear of terrorism which is worse than a traditional war. In terrorism you do not know where and when you and your family can be targeted. Death follows you constantly like a shadow.

At that time, I realised I had two options. Either to keep silent and wait to be killed or to speak out and then be killed. I chose the second one.

Dear brothers and sisters, for me peace is not only the absence of war but the absence of fear.

Peace is a world of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

I am very happy, there are many people in this world who are there to support me and show me love and hope. There are millions of people who want peace, justice and equality.

All over the world today, as I stand here talking to you, there are children being denied their basic human right to education. We must give them courage to overcome fear, we must give them hope to step forward and we must raise up their our voices so they can be heard.

Today I raise my voice for my Nigerian sisters who are still suffering from the imprisonment of Boko Haram. I empathise with them, their parents and their communities. And I am hopeful that my sisters will come back home safely, as millions of people have raised their voice for their safe return.

Finally, I would like to end with these beautiful words of Langston Hughes for my Nigerian sisters.

I Dream A World *By Langston Hughes*

I dream a world where man  
No other man will scorn,  
Where love will bless the earth  
And peace its paths adorn  
I dream a world where all  
Will know sweet freedom's way,  
Where greed no longer saps the soul  
Nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black or white,  
Whatever race you be,  
Will share the bounties of the earth  
And every man is free,  
Where wretchedness will hang its head  
And joy, like a pearl,  
Attends the needs of all mankind-  
Of such I dream, my world!