



A 15-year-old Pakistani girl targeted by assassins – Malala Yousafzai – is the first signatory of a new worldwide petition calling for urgent action to ensure the right of every child to safely attend school, launched today with the backing of the United Nations Special Envoy for Education.

The launch came in the wake of an attack that killed 14 students at an all girls' college in Pakistan, emphasized Special Envoy Gordon Brown, in an op-ed published today in the Huffington Post.

“This, the bloodiest atrocity yet in escalating violence against female students, comes eight months after the attempted assassination of Malala and her two friends, Kainat and Shazia, targeted by terrorists just because they wanted to go to school,” Mr. Brown wrote.

“That is why today, in advance of Malala Day on July 12, we are launching our worldwide petition to demand that global leaders ensure 57 million out-of-school girls and boys are given the chance of education,” he said.

Ms. Yousafzai's appearance at UN Headquarters on 12 July will mark her first major public speech since she was shot last October. She will be joined at the UN by hundreds of young people from around the world.

The petition and the UN event are part of an effort to establish universal primary education by December 2015, the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, a set of anti-poverty targets set by UN Member States in a 2000 summit.

In a statement issued for the petition launch, Ms. Yousafzai said that the terrorists in the attack on the girls' school, which UN [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon condemned over the weekend, were "cowards."

"The innocent girls who died on Saturday have nothing to do with politics and only wanted to empower themselves through education. Obtaining education is every man and woman's birth right and no one is allowed to take away this right from them," she stressed."

Mr. Brown and Ms. Yousafzai are supporting the initiative of Secretary-General Ban to accelerate progress towards the UN Global Education First Initiative to put every child in school, improve the quality of learning, and foster global citizenship by the end of 2015.

Source: [UN News Centre](#)