Beat: Miscellaneous

Pakistani teen activist flown to Britain for specialist medical care

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USPA News - A 14-year-old Pakistani girl, who was critically injured last week when she was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen for advocating for girls` education and criticizing the militant group, was flown to Britain on Monday for specialist medical care. Malala Yousafzai was shot by Taliban gunmen last week while traveling to school in her hometown in Pakistan`s Swat Valley.

She received emergency treatment in Peshawar before being transferred to a military hospital in Rawalpindi, which allowed the girl`s condition to stabilize. A spokesman for the Pakistani military said Monday that an international team of experts recommended to transfer Malala overseas now her condition is stable, rather than later when unforeseen complications could prevent such a transfer. Doctors expect the schoolgirl will need long-term treatment and rehabilitation, including damaged bones which need repair or replacement and intensive neurorehabilitation. An air ambulance, provided by the United Arab Emirates, took off from Rawalpindi on early Monday and flew her to Britain where she will be taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, which has the capability to provide integrated care to children who have sustained severe injuries. "The evacuation was arranged by the Pakistani authorities after an assessment by the medical team treating Malala. It follows an offer by the UK Government to assist Malala in any way that we could," UK`s Foreign Office said in a brief statement. A Pakistani Army intensive Care Specialist accompanied Malala during the flight. The Pakistani Army spokesman said the team treating the schoolgirl is "pleased" with her present condition, and praised the initial actions to save her life. "The view of the international experts was that the neurosurgery performed in Peshawar was exactly right and indeed saved her life," he said, adding that treatment she received at the Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology (AFIC) in Rawalpindi had stabilized her condition. Britain`s Foreign Secretary, William Hague, said Malala`s bravery in standing up for the right of all young girls in Pakistan to an education is an example to everyone. "Last week`s barbaric attack on Malala Yousafzai and her school friends shocked Pakistan and the world," he said on Monday. "Our thoughts remain with Malala and her family at this difficult time." The Pakistani government said it would pay the full cost of the medical evacuation, the treatment under the UK`s National Health Service (NHS) system, and any ongoing rehabilitation. Two other schoolgirls were also shot in last week`s attack by the Taliban, but neither were seriously injured.

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