

Sample Message to send UN Ambassadors with your Red Hands

His/Her Excellency Mr./Ms. [INSERT NAME]
Permanent Mission of [COUNTRY] to the United Nations
[ADDRESS]

Your Excellency:

I am writing on behalf of students at the [NAME OF SCHOOL OR GROUP] in [CITY AND COUNTRY]. We are very concerned about the continued recruitment and use of child soldiers around the world. To help end this horrible practice, we respectfully urge your government to ratify as soon as possible the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Child soldiers are fighting in at least 14 conflicts around the world. They are often recruited through force or deception, and exposed to horrific violence. They may begin as messengers or porters, but too often end up on the front lines of combat. Some are forced to commit atrocities and many girls are sexually exploited. They are denied an education and robbed of their childhood. Many do not survive.

2010 is the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Optional Protocol by the United Nations General Assembly. To date, 131 countries around the world have ratified this important treaty, which prohibits the forced recruitment of children under the age of 18 or their participation in hostilities. We would like to see every country in the world ratify the optional protocol, and have enclosed red hands that we have made to express our desire to stop the use of child soldiers anywhere in the world.

We ask you to use your influence to ensure that your government ratifies the optional protocol and makes clear its firm commitment to end the use of child soldiers.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,