

CHILD RIGHTS and ARMED CONFLICT



UNA-UK

www.una.org.uk



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Associated Schools

www.unesco.org.uk



Dignity and justice for all of us

**“We have lost
a part of our life, and it
will never come back”**

18-year-old, Burundi



Children and
ARMED CONFLICT

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Every year, 8,000 to 10,000 children are hurt or killed by landmines.

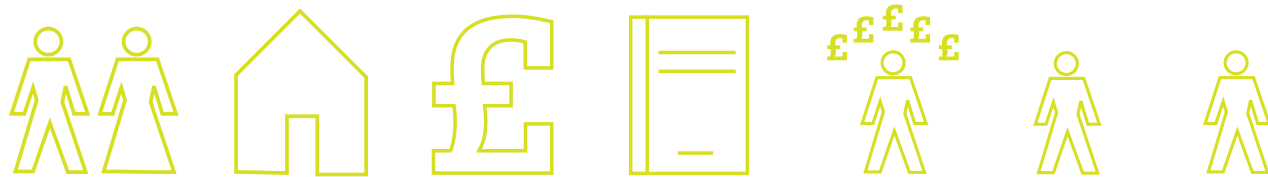
There are currently an estimated 250,000 to 350,000 child soldiers in the world.

Evidence from countries like El Salvador, Uganda and Sri Lanka suggests that over a third of child soldiers are girls.

Children as young as **FIVE** have been found working as soldiers.

CHILDREN IN CONFLICT

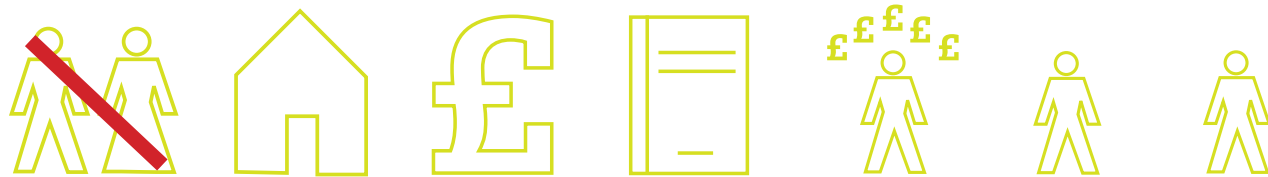
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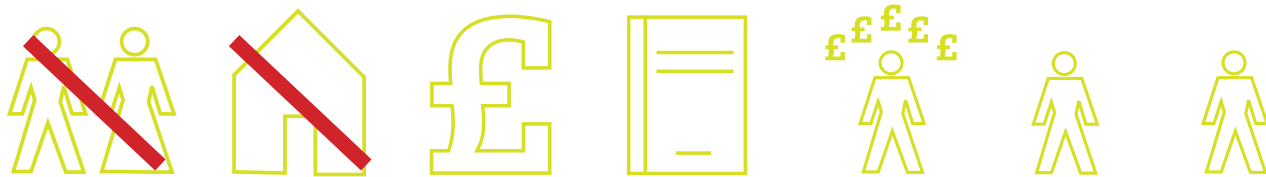
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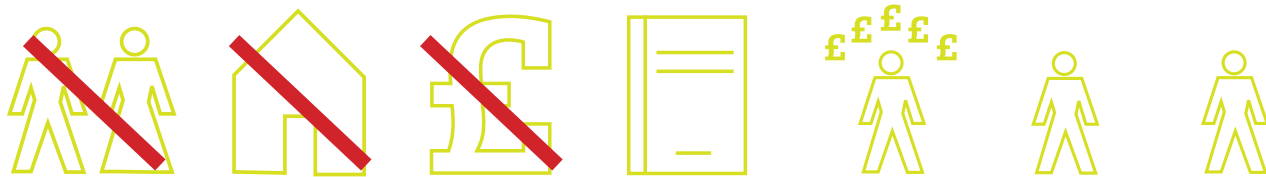
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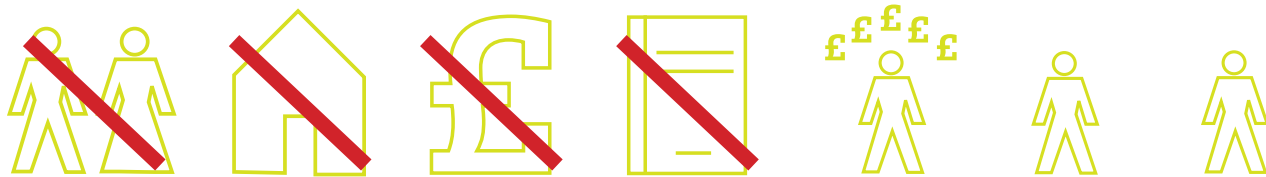
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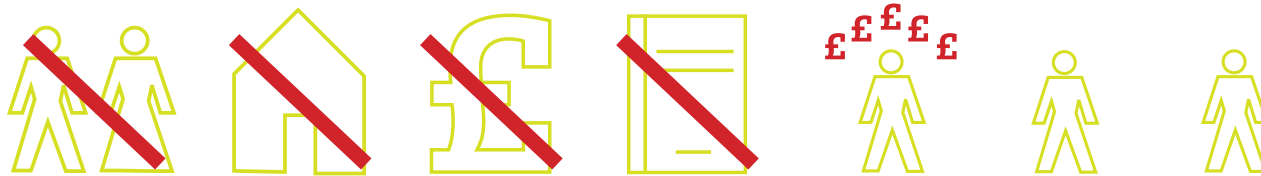
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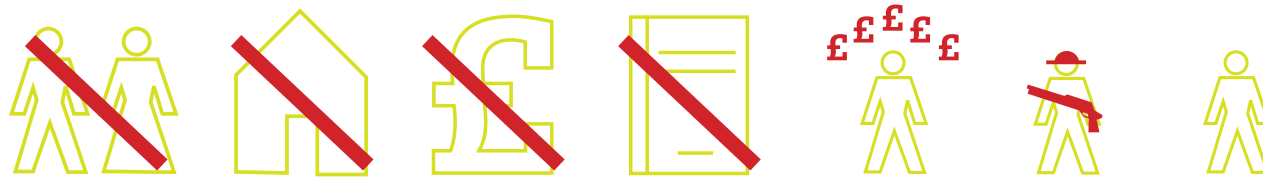
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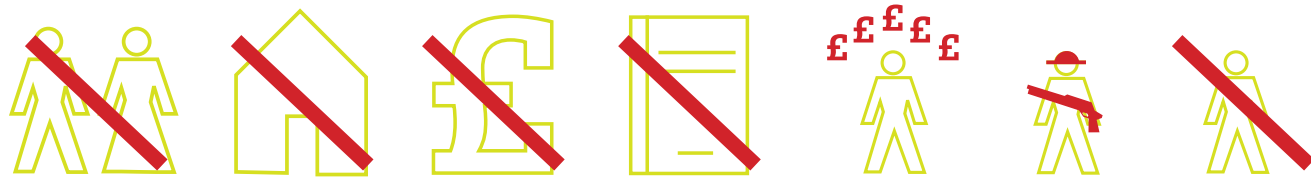
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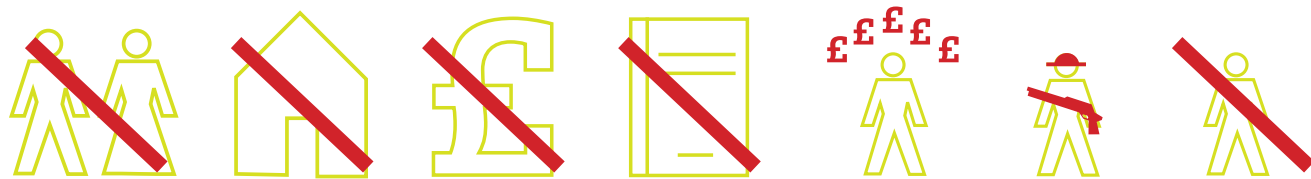
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In the worst cases, they might experience all of these things.



Image: Roger Hutchings/Alamy



Spotlight on **CHILD SOLDIERS**

Selvamani is a Tamil girl from Sri Lanka. The country has two main ethnic groups – Sinhalese (the majority) and Tamils (the minority). For much of the last three decades, there has been fighting between the armed forces of the mainly Sinhalese government and the ‘Tamil Tiger’ rebels who want a homeland in the north and east of the country. When Selvamani was just 15, she was kidnapped while walking to class and forced to join the rebels. “First they sent letters, then they began visiting my house...They told my family, ‘Each house has to turn over one child. If you don’t agree, we will take a child anyway’.” She participated in about seven months of training, waking up every day at 4am to assemble weapons, practise shooting, dig bunkers and study war tactics. “If you get too tired and can’t continue, they will beat you. Once when I first joined, I was dizzy. I couldn’t continue and asked for a rest. They said, ‘You can’t take a rest.’ They hit me four or five times.” Girls as young as nine were given the same training and the entire group would be punished if they couldn’t keep up. Selvamani said she was not allowed to write to her parents and only saw them twice in her two and a half years with the group. She thought about escaping but said that those who “tried to escape...ran to their homes, so [the group] was able to recapture them. They were tied and beaten”. Repeat attempts at escaping were sometimes punished with death. To read more, visit www.hrw.org/reports/2004/srilanka1104



What are **HUMAN RIGHTS?**

Human rights are the rights and freedoms that we all have.

- Some human rights are based on our **physical needs**.
The right to life. To food. To shelter.
- Other human rights **protect us**.
The right to be free from torture, cruel treatment and abuse.
- Human rights are also there to ensure we **develop to our fullest potential**.
The right to education. To work. To participate in your community.

Everybody has human rights.

Everybody has human rights. It doesn't matter **who** you are, **where** you come from, **what language** you speak or **what religion** you belong to. **You have a duty to respect the rights of others, just as they have a duty to respect yours.**

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Nobody can take your rights away.



Where do
HUMAN RIGHTS
come from?

Human rights are based on the values of:

- Dignity
- Justice
- Respect
- Equality

Human rights were **officially recognised** as values by the world when the United Nations was set up.

What is the **UNITED NATIONS?**



- The United Nations is an **international organisation** that was **established in 1945**, the year the Second World War ended.
- Its founders hoped it would be able to **prevent catastrophes like the Holocaust** from happening in the future.
- So **promoting human rights** became an aim of the UN, along with **maintaining international peace** and **reducing poverty**.



Can the
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CRC

- survival
- protection
- development
- participation

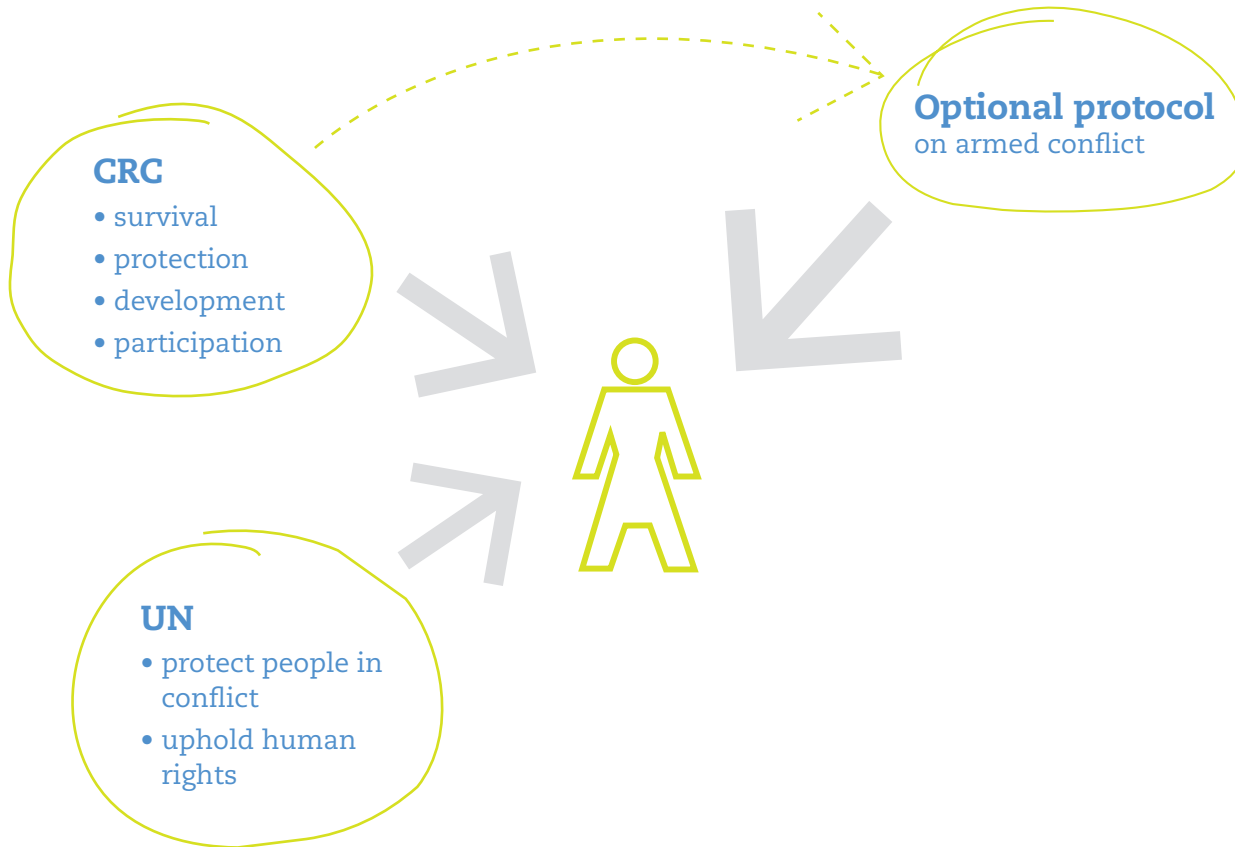


UN

- protect people in conflict
- uphold human rights

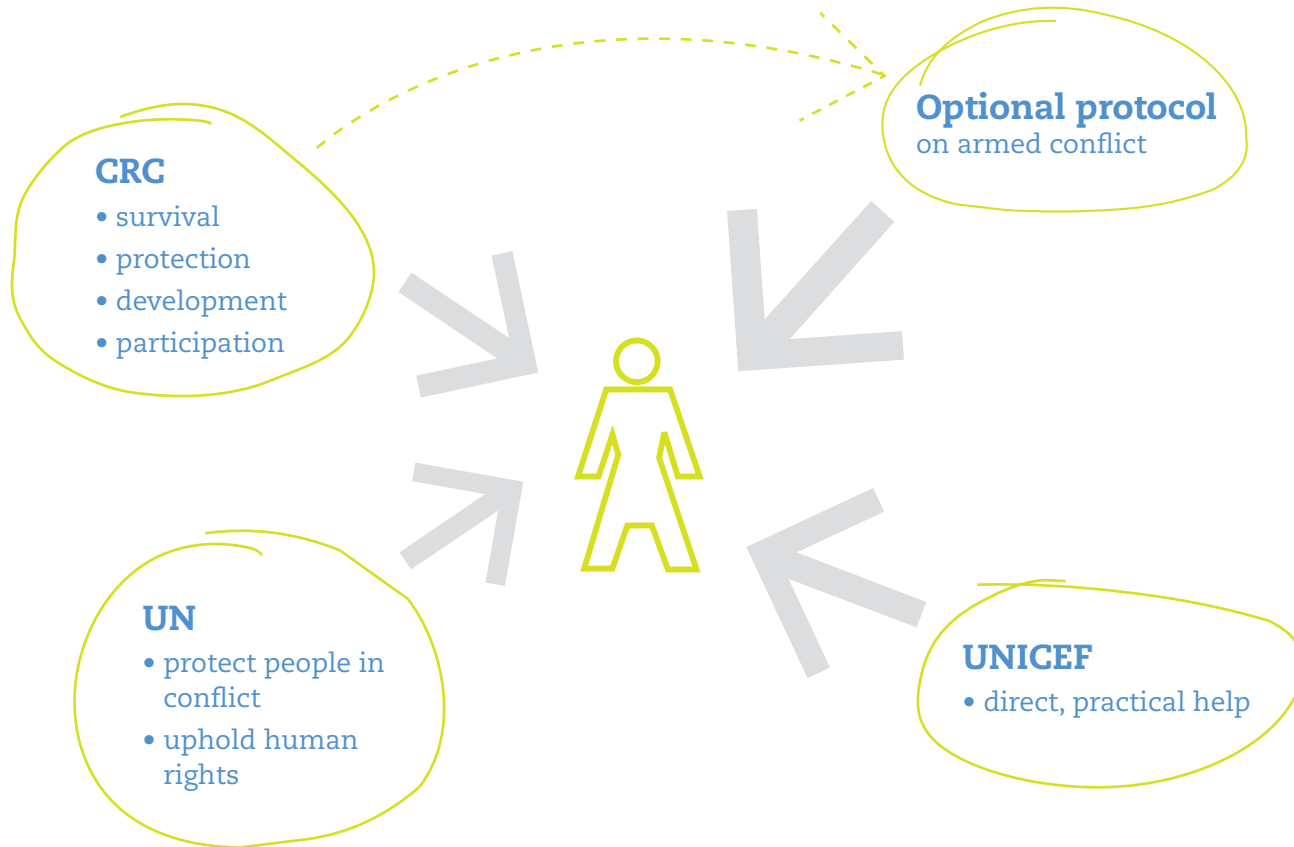


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**“We heard about the CRC...
and when somebody is
breaking the CRC we can
tell them to stop because
we know we have rights.”**

18-year-old, Sri Lanka

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