

An open letter to world leaders and parties to armed conflicts

Peace begins in the minds of children.

But in so many ongoing conflicts worldwide, peace is distant from reality for many millions of children. The chance lottery of where a child is born may mean they grow up happy and healthy, or they grow up amongst conflict knowing only war and its terrible aftermath.

War and conflict are perpetrated by adults. But every adult was once a child and grew up with experiences and guidance that shaped their lives. At the heart of this lies education. The lessons children learn in school are a rehearsal for later life, the values they form frame their views of others.

But if more than 70 million children do not even have the chance to go to school, and more than half of these children live in countries affected by armed conflict - what are these children learning? Children and their families repeatedly ask for education. Committed teachers and a relevant curriculum give children an alternative to confusion and conflict. Quality education gives access to information and develops skills and critical thinking that in turn make opportunities for change in peaceful ways.

Today, the anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Universal Children's Day, we call for the urgent implementation of quality education for all children, good education that gives children the best chance of a peaceful, prosperous future.

We, the undersigned, call on governments and other parties to armed conflicts to respect and promote schools as places of peace and safety.

- Ensure all children have access to quality education despite ethnicity, religion or language.
- Ensure all children can learn free from fear of recruitment into armed forces, violence or intimidation.
- Ensure all children receive an inclusive and relevant education that promotes an openness of thought and is accountable to children's families and communities.
- Ensure that quality education is made an integral part of every peace process.

Children cannot wait for education while we debate the difficulties and the details.

Peace begins in the minds of children, and it must begin today.

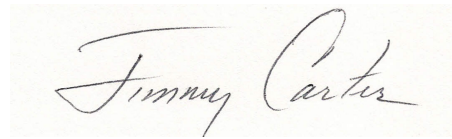


Mary Ellen McNish on behalf of **American Friends Service Committee**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1947



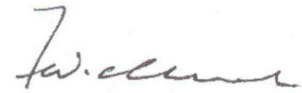
Irene Khan on behalf of **Amnesty International**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1977

(Signed) **Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1996

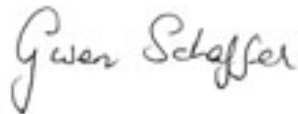


Jimmy Carter
Nobel Peace Prize, 2002

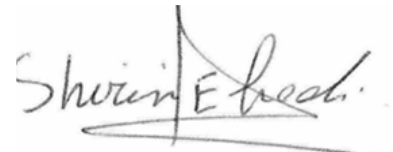
(Signed) **The 14th Dalai Lama**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1989



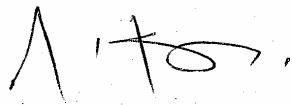
(Signed) **Frederik Willem de Klerk**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1993



Gwen Schaffer of behalf of
Clerk of Quaker Peace & Social Witness (formerly
Friends Service Council),
Britain Yearly Meeting
Nobel Peace Prize, 1947



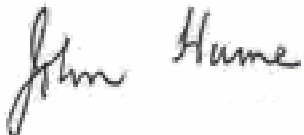
Shirin Ebadi
Nobel Peace Prize, 2003



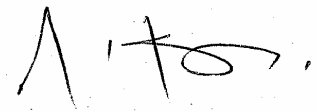
Mohamed ElBaradei
Nobel Peace Prize, 2005



Adolfo Pérez Esquivel
Nobel Peace Prize, 1980



John Hume
Nobel Peace Prize, 1998



Mohamed ElBaradei on behalf of **International Atomic Energy Agency**
Nobel Peace Prize, 2005



Betty Williams
Nobel Peace Prize, 1976



Jody Williams
Nobel Peace Prize, 1997



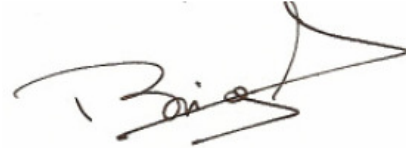
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
Nobel Peace Prize, 1985



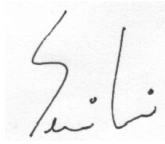
Juan Somavia on behalf of **International Labour Organisation**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1969



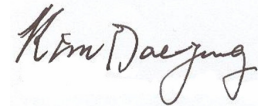
Rajendra K Pachauri on behalf of **Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change**
Nobel Peace Prize, 2007



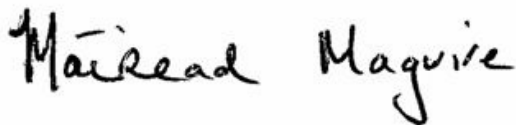
Sylvie Brigot on behalf of **International Campaign to Ban Landmines**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1997



Sein Win on behalf of **Aung San Suu Kyi**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1991



Kim Dae-jung
Nobel Peace Prize, 2000



Mairead Corrigan Maguire
Nobel Peace Prize, 1976



Wangari Maathai
Nobel Peace Prize, 2004

(Signed) **José Ramos-Horta**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1996



Colin Archer on behalf of **Permanent International Peace Bureau**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1910

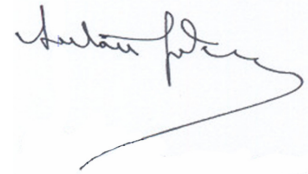


Rigoberta Menchú Tum
Nobel Peace Prize, 1992

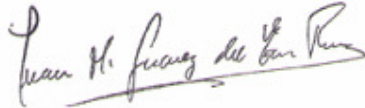
(Signed) **Oscar Arias Sánchez**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1987



Ann M. Veneman on behalf of
United Nations Children's Fund
Nobel Peace Prize, 1965



Antonio Guterres on behalf of **Office of the
United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1981 and 1954



**International Federation of Red Cross and Red
Crescent Societies**
Nobel Peace Prize 1963

(Signed) **Elie Wiesel**
Nobel Peace Prize, 1986



Bishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu
Nobel Peace Prize 1984

(Supporting Statement Provided by)
United Nations
Nobel Peace Prize 1988 and 2001