

## Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict

- 1993** Since the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, there has been significant criticism of Article 38 of the Convention as it is the only article which departs from the age limit of 18 and does so in relation to the most dangerous situations in which children might find themselves – situations of armed conflict. At its third session in January 1993, the Committee on the Rights of the Child prepares a draft optional protocol which it submits to the Commission on Human Rights.
- 1994** The Commission on Human Rights decides to establish a working group to elaborate, as a matter of priority, a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.
- 1998** In light of the failure of the working group to reach agreement on a draft text for the protocol, the Committee on the Rights of the Child makes recommendations to the working group and asks states that have not been willing to implement the 18-year age limit not to hinder the adoption of the optional protocol by other states.
- 2000** On 25 May 2000, the General Assembly adopts and opens for signature, ratification and accession, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The protocol raises the age for direct participation in hostilities to 18 years. It also requires States Parties to raise the minimum age for the voluntary recruitment of person into their national armed forces from that of 15 years.
- 2000** Ireland Signs the Optional Protocol on 7 September 2000.
- 2002** Ireland ratifies the Optional Protocol on 18 November 2002.
- 2006** Ireland submits its first State Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in December (due in 2004).
- 2007** In October 2007, the Alliance presents to the Pre-Sessional Working Group of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in Relation to the Optional Protocol.
- 2008** Formal examination of the Optional Protocol Report takes place in January and Concluding Observations and Recommendations for Ireland are issued by the Committee. The concerns voiced by the Alliance and other parties are echoed in the Committee's recommendations.