



Security Council briefing on Ukraine to discuss lessons learnt from the Minsk Agreements in the context of the Council's prevention efforts, 17 February 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
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[I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Malta.]

One year after the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, Malta reaffirms its full support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We continue to call for the immediate end to this war of aggression and the full withdrawal of all Russian forces from Ukraine's territory. Regrettably however, over the past few weeks we have instead witnessed renewed and prolonged attacks on Kyiv and other cities.

We underline the fact that Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, an affront to the rules-based order, and a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and International Law.

Furthermore, we cannot fail to note that the decision of the Russian Federation to recognise the 'so-called referenda' of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions ran counter to the Minsk Agreements that the Russian Federation wants to focus on today. The Minsk Agreements offered a chance for dialogue and the option to pave the way to define mutually acceptable solutions to resolve differences.



These Agreements were however doomed to fail since one of the Parties opted for a selective interpretation. Despite Russia's insistence that its role in the Minsk Agreements was solely one of mediator, it nonetheless chose the path of brutal aggression against a sovereign UN member state, Ukraine, leaving no room for diplomatic efforts.

To date, thousands of civilians were killed and injured as a result of this war. Yet, the Russian Federation is further escalating the aggression against its neighbour, pushing Ukraine into a grave humanitarian crisis. 40% of Ukraine's population is in dire need. Nearly 8 million people have fled to neighbouring countries and 5.3 million are internally displaced or unable to leave illegally annexed regions.

The repercussions of this war have also impacted thousands of Ukrainian children who have been displaced, deported, and deprived from the life, they used to know not so long ago. Malta strongly condemns the deportation of Ukrainian children and deplores the horrendous situation that has been brought upon them by breaking their family ties and denying them their rights, including the right to family life.

Grim consequences are also a reality for women and girls, who have been a target of sexual violence in conflict by Russian forces. We cannot fail in our



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responsibility to prosecute these crimes. Accountability must be our priority, and we fully support all efforts in the fight for justice.

In closing, we urge the Russian Federation to completely and unconditionally withdraw its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, stop the aggression, and abide by the UN Charter and international law.

Thank you.