



Briefing on the Situation in Somalia, 22 February 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

[I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Malta.]

I thank UNSOM Deputy Special Representative Kiki Gbeho, AU Special Representative El-Amine Souef, and UN Women Executive Director Sami Bahous for their briefings. We also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Somalia to the UN.

I would also like to register our deep disappointment that current conditions were not conducive to allow for the safe participation of a civil society representative to brief the Council on WPS issues. We remain firm in our belief that the voice of civil society needs to be heard, and we need to do more to enable the safe participation of civil society briefers without fear of reprisals, harassment, or abuse.

For these reasons, we are circulating as a document of the Security Council, the statement that would have been delivered by the Somali Gender Equity Movement (SGEM), a non-partisan socio-political global movement that comprises 9.000 diverse Somali women inside the country and in the diaspora, who have united to advocate for gender equity in Somalia.



Somalia is on its path towards a holistic transformation, and political reforms already achieved should continue to incentivize further progress. Progress in the constitutional review process to achieve an effective model of federalism for Somalia remains key.

We are encouraged by the recent agreements on the allocation of powers and the establishment of technical committees to review and prepare recommendations on issues of national security and universal suffrage elections. On this note, Malta underlines the importance of inclusive, free, and fair elections, and a civic space which represents all stakeholders.

The full, equal, and meaningful, participation of women is the backbone of any society. We welcome the launch of the Somali Women's Charter and the National WPS Action Plan and urge its full implementation. Only when all Somali women become an integral part of all policy and decision-making that a foundation for effective governance, sustainable peace, and development is established.

On the security front, 2022 was the deadliest year with a 153% increase in civilian casualties. Al-Shabaab continues to exploit regional instability. Malta strongly condemns all offensives carried out by Al-Shabaab, especially those targeting civilians.



Malta remains supportive of ATMIS which assists in the systematic harmonization of Somalia's security sector. Together with the EU, a major donor to ATMIS, we also continue to support a gradual handover of security responsibilities to Somalia. We commend the African Union's continued commitment, and appeal to ATMIS' eventual completion by 2024.

Somalia remains subject to the heaviest impacts emanating from food insecurity, compounded by extreme droughts. Almost half of the Somali population suffers from severe food insecurity. We are deeply concerned by trends of severe malnutrition and lack of hygiene, risking increases in diseases and further displacement.

We are alarmed by the way these overlapping threats have left children out of school and consequently, subject to exploitative and dangerous conditions. With up to 1,127 violations against children recorded, we call for swift justice and accountability, and we continue to support the work of the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict.

Malta is deeply committed towards combating all forms of violence, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. We are pleased to hear of a number of programmes developed towards raising awareness on conflict-related sexual violence, including multi-stakeholder workshops to address any social and legal impediments towards accountability.



We urge the Somali Authorities to investigate and prosecute, underpinned by a survivor-centred approach, all reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence. Perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable. We also echo UNSOM's call for a more gender-inclusive humanitarian response, with a focus on displaced women and girls in high-drought areas.

To conclude, Malta reiterates its continued support to Somalia. We commend the work carried out by Deputy Special Representative and UNSOM, in partnership with regional actors and the international community. The pursuit to restore lasting peace, security, and stability in Somalia should remain our compass.

I thank you.