



Briefing on the Situation in Somalia, 22 June 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President. We welcome His Excellency Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia to this meeting. I thank Special Representative Laing for her briefing and wish her all the success in her new role. I also thank AU Special Representative El-Amine Souef and WFP Executive Director McCain for their briefings.

Malta is pleased to note the positive engagement of Somalia, which signals the country's sustained progress. We are encouraged by the recent agreements, led by the National Consultative Council, towards a model for fiscal federalism and the amendments to the National Security Architecture.

As preparations are underway for next year's local and assembly elections, we reiterate that it is only with inclusive, free, and fair elections, and a safe civic space, that all voices can be heard and represented.

We call for the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in political, electoral, and constitutional processes. We commend efforts towards the implementation of the Somali Women's Charter and the National WPS Action Plan, including the ongoing multi-stakeholder conversation among federal ministries, civil society, and women leaders, supported by UN Women.



Nevertheless, Malta remains concerned with the security situation in the country, especially with the ongoing violence in Las Anod, which has left more than 300 casualties to date. We welcome ceasefire efforts by the Somali Government, Ethiopia, and clan elders, while reminding all parties of their obligations under international law.

Malta strongly condemns all offensives carried out by Al-Shabaab, which continue to represent a serious threat to the peace, security, and stability of Somalia. With surges in IEDs and complex attacks perpetrated by Al-Shabaab, with the latest one hitting an ATMIS FOB in Buulo Mareer on 26 May, we remember the peacekeepers who lost their lives as well as their families who paid the highest price.

We welcome the commitment displayed by Somalia and its neighbours, with Somalia's Frontline States Initiative bringing together Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. These efforts should encourage further progress in the security transition from ATMIS, as well as coordination between Frontline States, ATMIS, and partners.

Malta remains supportive of ATMIS and its intended tasks to be completed by 2024. It is crucial for financial support to be diversified while acknowledging the EU's support of more than 2.2 billion euro to the mandated mission since its inception.



President

Somalia remains heavily impacted by climate shocks. We commend the role of the climate security advisor within UNSOM, whose work has enabled a better understanding of how prolonged drought and flash flooding heightens farmer-herder conflicts, and civilians' susceptibility to radicalisation and recruitment by Al-Shabaab.

While famine has been averted thanks to sustained humanitarian assistance from donors, 6.6 million people are still projected to be food insecure, and about 1.8 million children under five will likely face acute malnutrition, and water-borne diseases, such as cholera.

We are gravely concerned by sexual and gender-based violence against internally displaced women and girls, as they comprise more than 80% of Somalia's IDPs. Perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable. In this context, we welcome UNSOM's support in addressing impediments to accountability and incorporating a gender-responsive humanitarian response. Humanitarian partners should ensure closer collaboration between agencies to address these dire protection needs.

Malta is also alarmed by the high number of grave violations committed against children, in particular recruitment and use, and killing and maiming.



We call on all parties to cease and prevent such violations, while we reiterate that child protection can only be effectively safeguarded through legal frameworks, and relevant action plans and roadmaps.

President

In closing, Malta reiterates its support to UNSOM and SRSG Laing. The crucial work of UNSOM continues to contribute towards lasting peace and security in Somalia. We remain encouraged by the multiplicity of voices engaged in advancing Somalia's state-building and security goals. The people of Somalia should remain at the heart of such efforts.

I thank you.