



Arria-formula meeting on “Enhancing the capacities of Member States to ensure a gender responsive approach to counter-terrorism”, 26 June 2023

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

Colleagues,

I begin with a simple, yet too-often-contested statement – effective counter-terrorism responses are gender-responsive and human rights compliant.

Gender-equal societies are more inclusive, just and cohesive, and therefore more resilient to violent extremism. We acknowledge Ms Ali’s work in making this vision a reality at the local level.

Colleagues, we have all made important strides in mainstreaming a gender-responsive approach to counter-terrorism. Today is an opportunity to acknowledge this. But we as Member States - including through the Security Council – can do more.

We urge an enhanced focus on gender in the implementation of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, by bridging the gap between policy and practice to ensure a gender-responsive approach to preventing and countering terrorism. In addition, the Security Council needs to mandate Member States to mainstream gender as a cross-cutting issue across all CT activities. And finally, the Counter Terrorism Committee should pay greater attention to



gendered experiences, including the disproportionate impact of sexual violence in terrorism contexts on women and girls.

There continues to be near-complete impunity for sexual violence perpetrated in terrorism contexts. It is therefore essential to address gaps in investigations and prosecutions in a human rights and gender-responsive manner. We welcome CTED's attention to this issue.

But a truly comprehensive gender-transformative criminal justice approach demands more. It demands that criminal justice processes are responsive to the experiences and needs of women and men as victims, witnesses or perpetrators for all terrorist crimes, not just sexual violence.

It means ensuring the full, equal, and meaningful participation and leadership of women in law enforcement and judicial institutions. And it means a holistic approach to and accountability for all terrorist crimes, including those with gendered dimensions.

But there are risks and challenges in this space, which must be addressed. Capacity building assistance must not be tokenistic nor instrumentalize women. It must also avoid a narrow conception of gender, to consider how the ideology, strategy and funding of terrorist groups are shaped by different understandings of structural gender inequality as well as gender roles, identities and stereotypes, including misogyny and militarized masculinities.



Going forward, we must enhance support for local women-led civil society organizations, women human rights defenders, and UN Women – who we are delighted to have brief us today – as the normative lead to promote gender equality in the context of CT and PVE capacity building.

We must ensure meaningful gender mainstreaming by UN entities and other capacity building providers, as exemplified by the IIJ today, by responding to the gendered impacts and forms of terrorism and counter-terrorism.

Finally, we must centralise the human rights of all persons, including women and girls, in the law and practice of counterterrorism.

Malta looks forward to building on today's conversation.