



Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict: 'How to Prevent and Respond to Grave Violations against Children in Armed Conflict', 5 July 2023

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

Thank you, President, and I thank the UK Presidency for convening today's open debate. I also thank Special Representative Gamba, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Abdi, and Ms Violeta for your insightful yet sobering briefings.

We are alarmed by the growing number of grave violations against children that were verified in 2022. Threats and attacks against monitors, which prevent them from reporting on the full scale of violations against children, are unacceptable. It is equally worrying that government forces were the main perpetrator of the killing and maiming of children, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access.

The Special Representative's progress in engaging parties to conflict to protect children is encouraging. However, we are deeply concerned by the deterioration in many situations faced by children such as in Myanmar, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, and others. The high number of grave violations against children in Ukraine, which does not represent the full scale of incidents, is also shocking. Malta calls for the continued objective, impartial,



and transparent listing of perpetrators in the annex of the Secretary-General's Annual CAAC report.

Moreover, as the Security Council, we must make sure that UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions have sufficient capacity, and robust mandates, to ensure that child protection concerns are addressed. This includes during the drawdown and withdrawal of any peacekeeping operation. Malta is actively collaborating with the Office of SRSG-CAAC on child-protection capacity training and will continue to do so in the coming years. We further encourage the Special Representative to further deepen the analysis about how gender norms have shaped children's exposure to each of the grave violations across different contexts.

President

As drivers of conflicts become more complex, also due to new armed actors and chronic crises, we call on Member States to cooperate at all levels to mitigate the impact of armed conflict on children, to intensify efforts to preserve peace, and find political solutions to war.

We also call on all parties to conflict to conclude and implement action plans, and to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It is crucial to invest in the UN's efforts to prevent and respond to grave violations, including efforts to monitor and report on them. Humanitarian access must always be facilitated, and actors should be able to engage with all parties, including armed groups.



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As Chair of the CAAC Working Group, Malta urges continued strong support towards the CAAC mandate in the Council and will do its utmost to ensure consensus on the protection of children in all country situations.

I thank you.