



United Nations General Assembly: Item 59 “The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine” 18 July 2023

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

Thank you, Madam President,

Malta aligns itself with the EU Statement and would like to deliver additional remarks in its national capacity.

Today’s UN General Assembly debate takes place at a critical time for Ukraine, Europe, and our international community.

The 26th of February marked nine years since the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. This unlawful annexation is a direct and substantial threat to international peace and security, it represents serious implications for the international rules-based order. Malta maintains its non-recognition stance in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262 (2014) and condemns the illegal annexation which represents a clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. This has been further aggravated by the ongoing illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which is another direct violation of the UN Charter.

As we have stated before, in the General Assembly and within the Security Council, we condemn all attempts by the Russian Federation to forcibly



integrate the illegally annexed peninsula into its territory, including the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship, illegal election campaigns and voting, population census, forcible change of the demographic structure of the population of Crimea and suppression of national identity.

Since the illegal annexation carried out by the Russian Federation in 2014, there has been a significant decline in the human rights situation within Crimea and other occupied territories. Malta emphasises the imperative of adhering to international human rights standards. The inhabitants of these regions, in particular those of the Crimean Tatars, are subjected to systematic limitations on their human rights and basic freedoms, including the rights of freedom of expression, religion or belief, association, and peaceful assembly. This is unacceptable and it's our duty to hold those responsible accountable for these actions.

Madam President,

As an organisation that highly promotes the values of peace, security and dialogue, the OSCE remains a vital partner in the resolution of this conflict. To this end, we highly commend the work being carried out through the OSCE Support Programme for Ukraine which was launched in November last year. This Programme is succeeding in addressing the immediate challenges posed by the war, and supporting long-term reforms towards rebuilding the democratic and social resilience of its institutions. We will continue to support the OSCE's work on this front.



We also, underline the need to further strengthen international cooperation through the International Crimea Platform.

Malta underscores the need to continue to refuse to recognise the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. We stand firmly by Ukraine and its people as they face unprecedented military aggression. We call on the Russian Federation and Russia-backed armed formations to respect international law, including international humanitarian law.

Madame President

Malta refers to the latest SG report on the ‘Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol’.

Malta calls for Russia to uphold its obligations under the UN Charter, international human rights law, and international humanitarian law in Crimea. In this regard, we call upon Russia to abide by the complete prohibition of torture and to ensure the independent, impartial, and effective investigation of such allegations in the peninsula. Furthermore, it is essential to ensure that the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and religion can be exercised by all individuals and groups in Crimea, without discrimination on any grounds or unjustified interference.



Madam President

To conclude, we reiterate the demand that the Russian Federation immediately and unconditionally ceases its aggression and withdraws all its troops and proxies from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised border, including the illegally occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol; and return to discussions to restore and facilitate unimpeded access to Crimea by international as well as regional human rights monitoring mechanisms.

I thank you.