



## Security Council briefing on Maintenance of Peace and Security of Ukraine, 26 July 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Mr Darren Camilleri  
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Thank you, President, and I also thank ASG Khiari for his remarks.

Only last week, the Russian Federation decided to withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative. This decision was taken in full knowledge of the fact that it seriously risks undoing everything that has been achieved in the past year. It was taken intentionally, knowing that it could exacerbate an already exceptionally difficult food security situation.

Since then, the Russian Federation has been repeatedly attacking Ukraine's Port of Odesa, a key hub for exporting grain, and deliberately targeting port infrastructure and food storage facilities. The collateral repercussions of these attacks have global ramifications and stand to adversely affect millions, particularly those in developing countries. As a Council we must monitor this situation closely and consider exploring new options if needed to make sure that the food supply continues to flow as smoothly as possible, despite this decision.

Administrative, cultural, religious, and residential buildings have also been subject to a barrage of strikes, resulting in a number of civilian deaths.



Russia's destruction of religious sites and places of worship in Ukraine is appalling. Ukraine's Institute for Religious Freedom and UNESCO have catalogued hundreds of religious sites that have been destroyed, damaged, or looted because of Russia's invasion.

To these figures we must also add Sunday's attack against Odesa's Transfiguration Cathedral, situated in the heart of Odesa's UNESCO world heritage-listed historic centre. Such actions may constitute a war crime. They are also a direct attack against Ukraine's identity, and further compound the immense suffering of the Ukrainian population. They illustrate, once again, Russia's complete disregard for the UN Charter, international law, and human life itself. We remain firm in our position that perpetrators must be held accountable for their actions.

In this connection, last week we welcomed the establishment of the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, and the establishment of the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine. These are two important steps towards achieving accountability and ensuring the right to reparations for the citizens of Ukraine, the legal entities of Ukraine, and the State of Ukraine.



Let us remember all the damage and devastation that Russia's war of aggression has caused in Ukraine. The deplorable and unacceptable attacks we have focussed on today are yet another worrying development in a long sequence of grave and disturbing events directly resulting from Russia's senseless, unjustified, and unprovoked war.

We must never forget that attacks against civilians and objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population are prohibited under international humanitarian law. Equally, we strongly urge Russia to facilitate the tracing of Ukrainian children and ensure family reunifications.

Finally, Madam President, we also stress that the liberation of Ukraine and the full restoration of its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders is the only way in which we can reach a just and lasting peace. In achieving this, we will also be restoring respect for the UN Charter.

I thank you.