



Security Council briefing Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

24 August 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President, I thank USG Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing. I also thank Ms. Rashevskaya and Mr. Kuleba for their remarks.

As Ukraine celebrates its Independence Day, we continue to reiterate that Ukraine has the right to determine its own future. Malta stands with you and the Ukrainian people in defending your freedom and independence.

Today's meeting illustrates, once again, the far-reaching consequences of this senseless, illegal and unprovoked war. A month ago, a permanent member of the Security Council opted to politicise humanitarian needs by terminating the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

This decision has had severe global consequences by exacerbating existing agricultural, energy, and financial crises, disproportionately affecting the world's most vulnerable populations. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), global food prices rose for the first time in months following the collapse of the landmark agreement to ship grain from Ukraine to the rest of the world.

President,



We cannot stress enough that the weaponisation of food is completely unacceptable and unconscionable. We regret that Russia disregarded a credible UN proposal ending a lifeline for millions facing hunger and spiralling food costs. The threat of famine, with people slowly starving to death, is a red line for international peace and security. We believe it is crucial to restore the Black Sea Grain Initiative as a means to re-balance the global food market and contribute to Ukraine's export of grains to the countries that need it the most.

Threats regarding the potential targeting of civilian vessels navigating in the Black Sea waters are unacceptable. Last week, a Russian warship fired warning shots at a cargo ship in the south-western Black Sea. These actions exemplified Russia's deliberate policy of endangering the freedom of navigation and safety of commercial shipping in the Black Sea. The provocative actions carried out by the Russian navy are a clear violation of international law of the sea and a crime against civilian vessels of a third country in the waters of other states.

President,

The recent attacks on the Kherson region, especially in Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia, Donbas and Kharkiv by Russia are alarming. Missile and drone strikes have destroyed vital infrastructure, health facilities, religious and cultural sites, and residential buildings which have all resulted in the deplorable loss of life. Russia's brutal war on the people of Ukraine is also



having a multi-layered impact on women, men and children, is also affecting people's safety and their physical and mental health, livelihoods, and compromising their access to healthcare and education.

Women and girls continue to face extremely high risks of gender-based violence. There are widespread reports of grave human rights violations including torture and conflict-related sexual violence. People remaining close to the frontlines, especially older persons and people with disabilities as well as specific needs, experience barriers to access humanitarian services. Malta strongly condemns these barbaric, indiscriminate and illegal acts of terror and urges Russia to immediately cease these attacks. Regardless of the context, International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law must be upheld.

President,

Let us recall the facts, Ukraine did not want war, nor did it provoke it. Russia is the aggressor and is committing war crimes in Ukraine. We remain firmly committed to ensuring that Russia is held fully accountable for all its crimes.

In closing, Malta reiterates in the strongest possible terms the need for Russia to end its aggression, and to immediately and completely withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

I thank you