



Briefing on UNITAMS (Sudan), 13 September 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President. I thank OCHA Director Wosornu for her briefing, and Permanent Representative Agyeman for his report. I also thank Ms Adil for her insightful and courageous words. You have given a voice to many women and girls and have empowered them in doing so.

In particular, I thank you, SRSG Perthes. We thank you for your professionalism and tireless efforts over the past couple of years. Meanwhile, we remain firm in our belief that blaming UN officials and scapegoating the UN will not bring us closer to reaching a just and lasting peace.

As the conflict in Sudan now enters its sixth month, we remain deeply concerned by the vicious cycle of violence, which we strongly condemn. We call on both parties to cease hostilities without pre-conditions and work towards negotiating a credible, lasting, and inclusive ceasefire.

We are disturbed by the way that violence has moved from Khartoum into the depths of Darfur, with the conflict escalating into systematic, ethnically based violence. All this bears terrifying similarity to twenty years ago.

Malta deplores the loss of life and the indiscriminate targeting of critical infrastructure and humanitarian and medical personnel, premises, and assets. We remind all parties of their obligations under international law, and that humanitarian workers must never be a target.



President

We deplore, in the strongest terms, the increasing use of sexual and gender-based violence as a tactic of war. Women and girls continue to face the most horrific impacts of the conflict. Reports of abductions have raised serious concerns that women and girls are being forced into slavery.

More than 4.2 million people need gender-based violence prevention and response services. With 80% of medical infrastructure across the country no longer functional, we call for the scale up of medical and psychosocial support and monitoring. Crucially, we call on the parties to ensure safe and unimpeded access for all those who need it.

Justice to survivors must be accompanied by thorough investigations. Perpetrators must be held accountable. We reiterate our support to the ICC Prosecutor's efforts in investigating incidents in Darfur in the current hostilities.

We are troubled by the almost ten-fold increase in grave violations against children, including killings, maiming, recruitment, and sexual violence. The suffering afflicted on children is unacceptable and must stop.

We are also concerned at the forcible displacement of over 5 million people within Sudan and across its borders into neighbouring countries. The catastrophic humanitarian situation in Sudan should only serve to guide the parties to lift off any impediments to the humanitarian response.



Humanitarian aid must reach those most in need in a safe, rapid, and unhindered manner.

We commend OCHA and humanitarian partners for their facilitation of food delivery. We are playing our part by contributing to UNHCR's Sudan emergency supplementary appeal, together with the EU's commitment of 256 million euro for humanitarian and development assistance in 2023.

President

Malta calls for coherence of ongoing mediation efforts to unlock the deadlock and provide a unified platform to de-escalate, cease hostilities and return Sudanese actors to the transitional drawing board. The efforts by the African Union, IGAD, and the League of Arab States, as well as by neighbouring and other parties, must remain complemented by unified messages by this Council.

We urge that women's groups and women's rights activities are included in the ceasefire negotiations, mediation efforts, and any future dialogue process. Their inclusion is integral to ensure that a settlement reflects the voice of the Sudanese people in a holistic manner.

We recognise the value that UNITAMS holds in providing its good offices in support of peace efforts. We also commend its stepped-up capacity to monitor and to document alleged human rights violations and abuses, as well as delivering humanitarian assistance.



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To conclude, President, Malta urges both parties to heed to peace and to bring Sudan back to the path of security and stability. We must spare the Sudanese people further pain and suffering.

I thank you.