



78th session of the UN General Assembly, Third Committee, Interactive Dialogue with Mr. Richard Bennett, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 24 October 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Justine Micallef, First Secretary

Thank you, Chair

Malta aligns itself with the statement [*to be*] delivered by the European Union.

Special Rapporteur,

We congratulate you on the extension of your mandate and thank you for your work. Your harrowing account of the Taliban's institutionalised and systematic persecution and discrimination of Afghan women and girls is gravely concerning. These are flagrant breaches of CEDAW and the Convention on Political Rights of Women, by which Afghanistan is bound. In this regard, we appreciate your recommendation to mandate a specific report on the application of gender to the definition of the crime against humanity of apartheid.

Furthermore, we are deeply concerned about the harmful, discriminatory and violent practices against children that you have identified, including forced **and** child marriage, child labour, and the trafficking and sale of children and body organs. Malta believes that the situation of women and children in Afghanistan must remain high on the UN's agenda, including **on** the Security Council's.

Special Rapporteur,

Although the Taliban have banned female employment, you recommend that the UN maintains **a** commitment to employing Afghan women and ensuring ethnic diversity



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among staff. We understand, however, that many UN entities in Afghanistan have not been able to guarantee women's safe employment. In these cases, how do you recommend the UN maintains a principled approach to delivering lifesaving humanitarian activities?

I thank you.