



Security Council briefing on the Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine, 31 October 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

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

Thank you, President. I thank Mr. Rajasingham for his important briefing and for all the work being carried on the ground.

Since the beginning of its war of aggression, Russia has been violating the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law. With its shelling deliberately targeting civilian populations and civilian infrastructure, the Russian Federation is also inflicting untold suffering on Ukraine and her people.

Just last week, Russia shelled a postal terminal in the Kharkiv region, a strictly civilian site with no military evidence. Six people were killed, several others were injured. This is but the latest in a series of such attacks, each time Ukrainian civilians are losing their lives because of Russia's continued aggression against the country.



This war is also having a multi-layered impact on men, women, and children. It is affecting people's mental and physical health, livelihoods, and compromising their access to education and healthcare. The onset of winter conditions in Ukraine brings a new dimension to the grave humanitarian crisis. Nearly 18 million people, half of Ukraine's population, is in need of humanitarian aid. Sustained and predictable humanitarian assistance will be critical during the cold season. Malta will continue to support the Ukrainian people by providing humanitarian aid and assistance as long as necessary.

President

On 19 October, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine shared new evidence showing that Russian authorities may have committed war crimes. These include wilful killing, torture, rape and other sexual violence, and the deportation of children to the Russian Federation.

Malta condemns such deplorable acts against civilians. These actions are prohibited under international law and may amount to war crimes. International humanitarian law must always be respected.



Malta remains firmly committed to ensuring that perpetrators are held fully accountable for all its crimes.

In closing, Mr President, last week's Ukraine Peace Formula meeting, which was held in Malta, is a clear example of the international community's desire to reach a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine, in line with the UN Charter. It is clear that this can only be achieved if Russia withdraws completely and unconditionally all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

I thank you.