



Security Council briefing on the Maintenance of Peace and Security of Ukraine, 6 December 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

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

Thank you, President. I also thank ASG Jenca and Director Rajasingham for their insightful briefings.

We strongly condemn the recent attacks on Kyiv, the largest since the beginning of the war, as well as the brutal shelling on the city of Kherson last Sunday by Russia. These are just two of the most recent attacks happening daily.

Attacks against civilian infrastructure are primarily designed to inflict even more suffering on the Ukrainian people and are a serious violation of International Law. Attacks must stop immediately. We once again express our full support for the ongoing processes to ensure accountability for violations. All perpetrators and accomplices must be held to account.

Malta remains deeply concerned that children continue to bear the brunt of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals remain at an all-time high. We call on Russia to cease attacks on schools and hospitals and



populated areas, to allow access to the UN and humanitarian actors and all territories, and to adopt and implement an action plan to end and prevent grave violations against children.

President

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to aggravate global food security. Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, as well as its campaign of systematic attacks against Ukrainian port infrastructures and grain stores, are undermining Ukrainian livelihoods, destabilising the international economy, and instrumentalising food.

The humanitarian needs in Ukraine are driven by the consequences of Russia's invasion. Today, one in five Ukrainian families are facing hunger: with agricultural and food producing communities the most affected. Ukraine's agricultural fields are potentially contaminated with remnants of war making them unable to harvest. As we have just heard from our briefers, winter will only continue to worsen the dire humanitarian conditions across the country.

According to the OHCHR, there have been 31 documented attacks targeting facilities crucial to grain production and export in Ukraine.



Such actions have caused significant harm to over 160 civilian infrastructure facilities and destroyed more than 300,000 tons of grain.

As a result, the export of Ukrainian grain cargoes to countries of Asia, Africa and Europe has been reduced by almost three million tons per month. This is exacerbating the worldwide food crisis and inflicting additional suffering on communities that are already grappling with insufficient access to food. As part of the EU's response, the Solidarity Lanes will continue to facilitate transit and export via land routes to world markets, which have enabled the export of more than 57 million tonnes of Ukrainian agricultural products so far.

President

The security, stability, and freedom of navigation in the Black Sea are crucial for sustainable grain exports. There have been threats to attack cargo vessels in the ports of the Black Sea and incidents involving civilian vessels resulting in casualties occurred last month. These actions significantly jeopardise the safety of maritime transportation and hinder commercial activities.



We once again urge Russia to fully comply with its international obligations and ensure the freedom of navigation in the Black Sea.

In closing, President, we underscore once again our conviction that Russia must immediately cease all hostilities in view of securing a just and lasting peace. Most importantly, it must unconditionally and completely withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

I thank you.