



## Security Council briefing on Maintenance and Peace of Security: Ukraine, 23 February 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier  
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

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Thank you, Madam President. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

We have convened to mark two years since the Russian Federation launched its unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. This war and its continuation is an affront to the UN Charter the work of the Security Council, and the architecture of international peace and security.

As members of this Council, we all have a collective responsibility to uphold the UN Charter. It is on us to further advance the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during its emergency special session on Ukraine. We must honour the calls of the Secretary-General for diplomatic solutions. All these elements are critical to restoring international peace and security.



Madam President

The number of civilian casualties in Ukraine significantly increased in December and January compared with previous months. OHCHR has verified that 158 civilians were killed and 483 injured solely in January. Since the beginning of this war there has been over 30,000 civilian casualties and more than 14 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine.

The deportation and forced transfer of children is of particular concern. According to the Ukrainian National Information Bureau, over 19,000 children have been deported or forcibly displaced. In this regard, Malta recalls the Independent Commission of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council, as well as the Secretary-General's annual report on children in armed conflict which shed a light on Russia's violations against children.



The consequences of this conflict have also impacted women and girls. They have been disproportionately impacted since they are at a far greater risk of gender-based and conflict-related sexual abuse. Despite the horror and trauma that many have experienced over the past 24 months, Ukrainian women and girls have shown remarkable courage and resilience. Millions of them are playing a crucial role in providing humanitarian aid.

Madam President

Malta is firmly committed to international law and the UN Charter. We therefore reaffirm our strong support towards all ongoing accountability processes. These include the important work of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Those responsible for the crimes committed in Ukraine must be held accountable. There can be no lasting peace without justice.

We must also not forget that by terminating the Black Sea Grain initiative, Russia has also taken the world's population hostage by blocking Ukrainian grain exports all the while stealing grain from occupied Ukrainian territories and destroying Ukrainian grain facilities.



In the face of this unilateral blockade, the EU has strengthened its support to Ukraine and to the global food security. The EU will keep on investing in the ‘Solidarity Lanes Action Plan’, which has allowed Ukraine to export 67 million tonnes of grain, oilseeds, and related products since May 2022.

In closing, Madam President, Malta will continue to support all efforts to address the consequences of Russia’s aggression. We also reiterate that the only step towards a just and lasting peace would be for Russia to immediately cease all hostilities, and unconditionally, completely withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

I thank you.