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Security Council briefing on Children and Armed Conflict: *Addressing the Consequences of the Denial of Humanitarian Access for Children, 3 April 2024*

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

*[I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of
Malta]*

I welcome Special Representative Virginia Gamba, and Deputy Executive Director Ted Chaiban, and thank them for their important and insightful briefings. I also thank Ms. Atim Niger-Thomas for sharing your perspective, and for the inspiring work you and your organisation carry out. On this occasion, I also pay tribute to the World Central Kitchen staff members killed by an Israeli strike yesterday in Gaza. We recall that humanitarian personnel must always be protected.



Across the globe, children face lasting humanitarian consequences of the denial of humanitarian assistance and access. Since 2005, when the CAAC mandate started monitoring and reporting on the denial of humanitarian access, the number of instances have increased every year. Last year alone, there were nearly 4,000 violations verified for 2022. There is an unprecedented number of children in need of humanitarian assistance.

Whether brought about through attacks on humanitarian workers and convoys, restrictive laws and decrees, or bureaucratic and arbitrary impediments, such barriers are unacceptable and require the full attention of this Council.

In Sudan, the escalation of conflict has displaced over 4 million children, making it the world's largest displacement of children. 14 million children need urgent humanitarian assistance. Bureaucratic impediments, failure by the parties to the conflict to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers, and numerous attacks on and looting of humanitarian convoys, have further impeded children's access to food and medical aid and has trapped them in the conflict.



In Gaza, the continued conflict and near complete lack of humanitarian access has been catastrophic for children. Without an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the denial of essentials such as food, medicine, and clean water, is accelerating acute malnutrition and mortality. We are further alarmed by the denial of access to children who have been detained or abducted, and who have been reported to be subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment.

We are also gravely concerned about the deteriorating situation in Haiti. The escalating violence and displacement have deprived more than 3 million children of essential services. Humanitarians are putting their own safety at risk to try and provide essential aid.

The denial of humanitarian access continues to be verified in other situations on the CAAC agenda such as the DRC and Yemen.

In Ukraine, civilians, including children, continue to face significant humanitarian needs and more than ever before require the provision of life-saving and life-sustaining aid.



In Afghanistan, the banning of female humanitarian workers is an egregious violation of their rights. It effectively puts the lives and well-being of all Afghans at risk, especially among women-headed households.

The denial of humanitarian access can have severe gender and age differentiated impacts on children throughout their development. We support a concerted effort to measure the impact of denial of humanitarian access on children, and to strengthen age and sex disaggregated monitoring and analysis of this grave violation.

The actions needed to prevent these impacts are inherently political. Denying humanitarian access to children is a grave violation of children's rights under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Malta remains committed to protecting the most vulnerable.

[I now resume my duties as President]