



Security Council briefing on Threats to International Peace and Security (TIPS): Ukraine, 20 May 2024

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

Thank you, President, and I also thank High Representative Nakamitsu and Ms Kimberly for their briefings.

I offer our condolences to the government and people of Iran as well as the to families and all the victims of the helicopter crash on Sunday.

Ukraine is facing an ever-intensifying brutal onslaught by Russia, which has been escalating its attacks, particularly in the east and northeast of the country. Attacks increased by 17 percent between March and April, most of which have included glide bombs which can pack hundreds of explosives in a single blast.



Russia continues to target power plants and sub-stations in Ukraine, as part of a systematic campaign to cut off electricity and essential services to thousands of civilians. A week ago, this Council met to discuss the humanitarian consequences of Russia's aggression. On that occasion, we highlighted the overwhelming toll that this war has brought to civilians, hospitals, schools, and energy infrastructure. We cannot turn a blind eye to this suffering. On the contrary, it should be at the centre of our considerations.

President

Turning to arms transfers, the reports that the Russian Federation is procuring weapons and ammunition from the DPRK and using them in Ukraine are deeply worrying. Debris from a missile that landed in Kharkiv was from a North Korean Hwasong-11 series. Seen in this light, Russia's decision to veto the renewal of the mandate of the 1718 Panel of Experts is even more troubling and disconcerting.



Apart from this, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has verified that more than 10,500 civilians have been killed and over 20,000 injured in Ukraine since February 2022. Most of these casualties are a result of the use of explosive weapons, including armed uncrewed aerial vehicles, with wide area effects in populated areas. Beneath the damage and destruction, lie deep psychological wounds caused by Russia's war. Since 10 May, nearly 8,000 civilians have been forced to flee from their villages and settlements in the Kharkiv region.

Attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure violate international humanitarian law and are completely unacceptable. They must stop immediately. We stress once again the need for full accountability for all crimes committed against Ukraine.

The upcoming 'Summit on Peace in Ukraine', to be held in Switzerland in June will send a clear message in this regard. Malta welcomes this effort which will provide a framework for dialogue on ways towards a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace for Ukraine based on international law and the UN Charter's principles, including sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.



Until that day comes, we remain firm in our position that Ukraine has the inherent right to defend itself, as enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter. It is entitled to protect its citizens, its borders, its sovereignty, and its territorial integrity, just like any other member of the United Nations. It also has the right to rely on its allies to do so.

On this occasion, we also reiterate that the Russian Federation holds the key to ending this war. It can do so right now by withdrawing its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

I thank you.