



Security Council briefing on Women and Peace and Security: Sustaining WPS Commitments in the context of accelerated drawdown of peace operations, 7 August 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

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

Thank you, President, and I also thank USG Bahous, ASG Pobe, and Ms. Khair for your comprehensive recommendations. The rapid pace of these transitions presents unique challenges that require our immediate attention and action.

Gender equality must remain at the core of the UN's strategy, footprint, and capacity to support sustainable peacebuilding. Regrettably, we are witnessing the withdrawal of UN Peace Operations and Special Political Missions without meeting the minimum conditions for ensuring women's security, humanitarian access, and the rule of law.

The precipitous exit of police and human rights operations severely constrains the UN's capacity for civilian protection, including early warning, mobile monitoring teams, and local mediation.



Since 2019, all remaining multidimensional peace operations have embarked on or intensified transition planning. Consistent with UN policy, these processes must ensure meaningful consultations with women's groups, and integrate gender-responsive analysis to gauge the impacts of transitions on women, men, girls, and boys.

President

Resolution 2594 (2021) underscores the necessity of embedding robust gender analysis and technical gender expertise throughout all stages of mission planning, mandate implementation, and review. We emphasise the critical need for including gender expertise among transition specialists. This is essential for defining gender-responsive benchmarks that ensure missions are not forced to exit without fulfilling minimum conditions for civilian safety and security. This is especially important in contexts such as MONUSCO's withdrawal and the deployment of SAMIDRC.



We support the Secretary-General's call for clearer and more consistent use of gender-responsive benchmarks and standalone gender equality indicators. These should assess progress and establish minimum conditions necessary to ensure the sustainability of WPS commitments. However, these commitments must be implemented. In Sudan, women face widespread sexual and gender-based violence and continue to be excluded from peace talks and negotiations.

As Ms Khair has urged, we must safeguard and amplify women's participation in peace and political processes. The hard-won progress in supporting women's leadership in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding must not be lost during transitions.



We also advocate for increased women's representation and gender expertise at all levels in peacekeeping, even as overall force numbers decrease. This is imperative for continued political engagement on WPS issues post-drawdown, by retaining gender expertise within the remaining UN presence, and among affected communities, host countries, and regional actors assuming mandates for civilian protection. This is essential for maintaining progress following the departure of missions, consistent with the UN's 2013 Policy on UN Transitions.

Transition planning must allocate sufficient resources to address conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. Despite agreement on the need for women's protection advisers, these specialists are deployed in only eight of the more than 20 countries covered in the SRSG's annual report on sexual violence in conflict.



The Peacebuilding Fund can be leveraged to address emergency gaps and catalyse gender-transformative security and justice sector reform, arms control, and disarmament. We recognise the important advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission in advocating for sustained international attention and support for peacebuilding priorities throughout and beyond UN transition processes.

In closing, President, we call on all Member States to ensure that mission drawdowns do not heighten risks to women's security or erode gender equality gains.

The failure to prioritise gender equality in these transitions undermines women's security and jeopardises sustainable peace. Immediate and decisive action is needed to integrate gender perspectives in all aspects of peace operations and transitions. Increased funding, enhanced political engagement, and sustained support for women's leadership and protection are critical priorities.

I thank you.