



## Security Council briefing on the Maintenance of Peace and Security of Ukraine, 4 December 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms. Francesca Gatt

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Thank you, President, and I also thank Executive Director Russel, Mr Raymond, and Ms Rashevskva for their briefing.

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine represents one of the gravest humanitarian crises of our time, with children bearing a disproportionate burden of its devastating consequences. It is imperative that the international community prioritises their protection, and makes sure their voices and needs remain at the forefront of all discussions and actions.

The immense suffering endured by the youngest and most vulnerable members of Ukrainian society underscores the urgent need to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law. This responsibility is grounded in international frameworks such as the Safe Schools Declaration, the Paris Principles, and the Vancouver Principles, which prioritise the protection of children in armed conflict, and demand our concerted efforts to safeguard their rights and futures.



Malta calls for immediate and coordinated international action to address the deportation and displacement of Ukrainian children. We stress the importance of family tracing, reunification, and unhindered access to humanitarian aid for affected children. Furthermore, Malta strongly condemns any coercion exerted on children and parents in areas of Ukraine temporarily controlled or occupied by the Russian Federation to enroll in schools following the Russian curriculum. Such actions undermine children's cultural and educational rights.

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing killing and maiming of children, as well as the devastating impact of explosive weapons with wide-area effects, particularly in populated areas. We highlight the life-altering consequences of mines, especially on children, which is why 160 countries have signed the Mine Ban Treaty.

Furthermore, the continued targeting and military use of schools and hospitals constitute grave violations against children, and must be unequivocally condemned. These acts exacerbate the suffering of Ukraine's children and hinder their access to safety, education, and healthcare.



## President

Malta urges the Russian Federation to grant the United Nations immediate and unfettered access to areas of Ukraine temporarily under its control or occupation. This access is critical to ensuring the protection of children and the provision of necessary humanitarian support. We remain steadfast in our commitment to upholding international law and safeguarding the rights of children in Ukraine during this conflict.

We stress, again, the need for full accountability for all crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine, in particular to this context, we refer to the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court for the war crime of unlawful deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children.

In the midst of today's discussion, we strongly call for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine, in line with the UN Charter. We will support all efforts aimed at achieving such a goal.



Until then, Ukraine has a right to defend itself under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Children everywhere and also in Ukraine have a right to grow up unhindered by the scourge of war and in this spirit we once more call on the Russian Federation to immediately end the war it started and to withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

I thank you.