



PERMANENT MISSION
OF MALTA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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UNSC Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security

Statement delivered by HE Natasha Meli, Permanent Representative of Malta
to the United Nations, 17 June 2026

Thank you President,

I thank the Presidency for convening this important debate and for advancing a concept note that rightly places women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation at the centre of peace processes.

Malta aligns itself with the statements delivered by the European Union and the Group of Friends of WPS.

At a time of rising conflicts and deepening fragility, the message is clear: peace cannot be sustainable when half of the population remains excluded from shaping it.

While the international community has made important achievements under the WPS agenda, barriers that prevent women from participating fully, equally, meaningfully, and safely in peace processes and post-conflict transitions persist. Women remain underrepresented in peace negotiations and decision-making - less than 10 per cent of negotiators, just over 13 per cent of mediators, while bearing disproportionate impacts of conflict, including violence and structural inequality.

Yet, women are not only victims of conflict but are essential actors in conflict prevention, resolution and recovery.

President,



Malta remains committed to the WPS Agenda. Following the completion of our first National Action Plan, we recently launched our Second National Action Plan on WPS (2025–2030)—an ambitious, evidence-based framework based on a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, anchored in inclusive partnerships and national ownership.

During its tenure on the UN Security Council (2023–2024), Malta worked to ensure that the WPS agenda was fully and meaningfully integrated into the Council’s work. We supported the safe participation of women civil society briefers, recognising their essential contributions to informing Council decision-making. We created spaces for women peacebuilders—from Afghanistan to Somalia—to engage directly with Council members and shape international responses.

Malta’s engagement extends beyond the Council. We continue to advance gender-responsive approaches across regional and international frameworks, including within the OSCE and the EU’s security and defence engagements. We have also taken leadership in integrating gender perspectives into disarmament, including as Gender Focal Point under the TPNW.

Building on this, allow me to highlight three areas for action:

First, we must remove the barriers that continue to prevent women from participating fully, equally, meaningfully, and safely in peace processes and political transitions. When women have a seat at the table, peace agreements are stronger, communities are safer, and recovery is more durable.



Second, ensuring sustained and predictable support for women-led civil society organizations, who remain indispensable actors in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Malta has contributed financially towards the WPS Agenda, such as through our contributions towards the UN Women Afghanistan Country Office, the Rapid Response Window of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and the UN Women's WPS Global Facility.

Third, strengthening accountability, so that commitments translate into measurable change.

President,

In closing, Malta will continue to work with partners across the United Nations system. We recall that the WPS agenda is not only about giving women a seat at the table, but a guarantee that peace itself has a future. Peace cannot be built without women, and it cannot be sustained without their leadership.

Thank you.