



PERMANENT MISSION
OF MALTA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

UNSC Open Debate on Conflict Related Sexual Violence

Statement delivered by HE Natasha Meli, Permanent Representative of Malta
to the United Nations, 8 July 2026

Thank you Madam President,

Malta thanks the Democratic Republic of the Congo for convening this important debate and we welcome your presence Madam Prime Minister. We would also like to extend our appreciation to SRSG Patten and Director Carine Jocelyn for their valuable contributions.

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

Madam President,

At the outset, Malta reaffirms its strong support for SRSG Premila Patten and her Office, whose work is essential to documenting the realities of conflict-related sexual violence and advancing accountability and survivor-centred responses.

The latest report of the Secretary-General makes clear why this work remains so urgent. As conflicts worldwide increase in number, intensity and duration, so too does the deliberate and devastating use of sexual violence as a tactic of war. Malta is deeply alarmed by the sharp rise in both the scale and severity of conflict-related sexual violence documented in the report.

We condemn all forms of sexual violence irrespective of where they occur or the country, group or individual responsible for them. We call on all parties listed in the Secretary-General's report to cease all forms of CRSV (Conflict Related Sexual Violence) in compliance with international humanitarian and



human rights law, and to cooperate with relevant national and international investigative mechanisms.

We are equally concerned at the increased targeting of women and girls in conflict. Women and girls often bear the harshest impact of sexual violence, with lasting physical, psychological and social harm for individuals, families and communities. We therefore call for gender-responsive approaches to be embedded in all actions aimed at preventing and ending CRSV, ensuring that the specific needs, rights, and voices of women and girls are placed at the centre of every response.

Yet for too many survivors, justice remains elusive, while access to essential, life-saving services is still out of reach. This underscores the urgent need for accountability. Ending impunity for sexual violence is a legal and moral imperative for all states, and survivors must be able to access justice without fear of stigma, retaliation or further harm. This requires adequately resourced, independent and survivor-centred investigations and prosecutions, as well as access to reparations, legal assistance and protection services that uphold survivors' dignity, rights and agency.

President,

During Malta's Security Council presidency in April 2024, we placed CRSV at the heart of our agenda and chaired the annual open debate which focused on how to prevent CRSV through disarmament and gender-responsive arms control. We also underscored the importance of inclusive participation, ensuring the safe engagement of women civil society briefers, and advocated for stronger accountability, including through the use of targeted sanctions against perpetrators of CRSV. In the same year, the Council reinforced the recognition of sexual violence as both a security threat and a tactic of terror making



conflict-related sexual violence a listing criterion within the ISIL/Al-Qaeda sanctions regime.

More recently, Malta adopted its second National Action Plan on WPS (2025-2030) which translates our commitments on CRSV into concrete action. Under this National Action Plan, Malta is enhancing capacity-building efforts by identifying and providing training on WPS, including the prevention of and response to CRSV, for diplomats and military personnel, including prior to deployment. Through these efforts, Malta seeks to strengthen awareness, improve preparedness, and contribute to international efforts aimed at preventing and ultimately eliminating conflict-related sexual violence.

As a proud member of the International Alliance on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Malta remains committed to advancing all aspects of this agenda.

President,

In conclusion, the time for commitments alone has passed. We urge Member States, parties to conflict and international actors to translate words into concrete action: to prevent CRSV, to hold perpetrators accountable and guarantee survivors' access to justice and comprehensive, survivor-centred services.

I thank you.