



SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by Mr. James Buckley Counsellor

(Check Against Delivery)

Madame Chair,

Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to address the floor on behalf of the Sovereign Order of Malta. We are confident that your diligence and leadership will be a notable influence on the effective work of this Special Committee.

The Order of Malta has a 900 year-long history of work dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering, which is the Order's founding principle. The Order of Malta's extensive international network of hospitals and 100,000 trained volunteers and employees, many of whom are medical personnel, have become central to the deliverance of medical care during peace missions, in which the Order has been active since 1991. The Order of Malta holds that Peacekeeping Operations and the protection and promotion of human rights is a primary responsibility of the international community.

Madame Chair,

The Order has a rich history of providing medical support to the mandates of UN peacekeeping forces through the Order's humanitarian arm, Malteser International. Following the Gulf War in 1991, Malteser provided 15 medical teams to UNIKOM along the border of Iraq and Kuwait. Each team of 5 doctors, 2 nurses and 7 paramedics worked to provide primary healthcare to 1,400 peacekeepers. Additionally the teams trained UN military observers in first aid, monitored the hygiene of peacekeeping camps, acted as emergency units during casualty evacuations, and provided healthcare to the local populations in the absence of the states' abilities to do so.

Malteser International, working in conjunction with the German Federal Foreign Office, provided 1.4 million Euro each year to help UNIKOM complete its mandate, which was achieved in 2003.

In 1998, Malteser International developed the Medical Start-Up Kit, a mobile medical module, created for use in transitional phases of Peacekeeping missions. Each module contains tents and medical equipment allowing for the primary healthcare of approximately 100 individuals. The modules can be deployed within 5 weeks to anywhere in the world. In 2003, the

Medical Start-up Kit served as the base for the UNAMA mission in Kabul, in order to provide medical service for UNAMA personnel and their families. Malteser was also engaged to support the Afghan forces in constructing a new medical service for the Afghan police. Through Malteser, the Order of Malta provided 3.5 million Euro for the deployment of the kits and the training of local forces in Afghanistan.

These examples represent just a small portion of the actions the Order of Malta and its humanitarian arm, Malteser International, have taken to display their support for and commitment to UN Peacekeeping.

Madame Chair,

The Order of Malta affirms that UN Peacekeeping Missions are and must continue to be a vital player in the alleviation of human suffering as the result of conflict. The Order heartily supports the inclusion of protection of civilians in the mandates of peacekeeping missions, but also acknowledges that more must be done on this front. Too frequently, civilians bear the brunt of today's armed conflicts.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, where female civilians are systematically raped and abused as a result of ongoing conflict, the Order provides psychological and medical care to approximately 49,000 women victims in 64 health centers across the country. The Order has also built or renovated 21 healthcare facilities in South Kivu, provided medical kits to over 20 health centers that are treating 30,000 displaced civilians, and the Order remains a first responder in regions affected by near constant violence. Where the protections of civilians fails or is made impossible, it is imperative that civilians at least have access to critical healthcare and psychosocial services.

As the international community turns to the escalating conflict in Mali, the Order would like to emphasize that at times of unrest, access to rudimentary healthcare becomes more critical as civilians carry the burden of displacement and domestic facilities become overwhelmed. The Order currently funds 11 dispensaries and health centers across 5 regions of Mali, and it has seen the demand for these services increase as civilians flee the conflict. The Order of Malta gently asks the international community to place civilian access to healthcare, an integral part of the protection of civilians, on the list of priorities as the global community addresses the conflict in this country.

Madame Chair,

The Order of Malta would like to thank you for providing this platform to share our experiences with the other members of the international community. The Order of Malta believes that maintaining effective humanitarian assistance, both to peacekeepers and civilian populations, is crucial to the success of peacekeeping missions. The Order wishes to express its support for international efforts to maintain peace and stability in troubled regions. We look forward to continued collaboration with UN Peacekeeping to achieve our joint goals of stability and the alleviation of suffering where it is most acutely felt.