

**STATEMENT BY H.M.E.H. THE PRINCE AND GRAND MASTER OF THE  
SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA**

**AT THE UKRAINE RECOVERY CONFERENCE 2025**

Rome, 10 July 2025

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address, on behalf of the Sovereign Order of Malta, this most distinguished audience. We are here today at this conference, which is of utmost importance to the free and democratic world, to discuss the subject of the recovery of Ukraine. I sincerely thank Their Excellencies, Prime Minister Meloni and President Zelensky, for their kind invitation.

The Sovereign Order of Malta and Ukraine established diplomatic relations in 2008. Well before this, however, in 1990, months before Ukraine's Declaration of Independence in August 1991, the Order founded its national relief corps to serve the needs of the Ukrainian people. Since then -- in fact, since the very beginning of post-Soviet Ukraine -- the Order has been deeply rooted in the social fabric and the civil society of Ukraine.

Our relief corps is composed of Ukrainian citizens. Time and time again, these courageous men and women overcome huge challenges and take on extremely high risks to bring relief to a suffering people. This has been especially true in the last three

years as the world has witnessed an escalation of the war, and with it, seemingly endless human tragedies.

Soon after the outbreak of the conflict, the Order of Malta facilitated the creation of humanitarian corridors. These corridors were meant to enable the vulnerable civilian population to escape the death and destruction relentlessly bearing down on them in their villages and towns. They were the result of joint efforts on the part of the Order's relief corps in Ukraine, a number of the Order's relief corps based in neighbouring countries, in co-ordination with our Embassy in Kiev.

With the support of Malteser International, the Order has also been focused on the treatment of people who suffer from severe mental illness and psychological distress as a consequence of wartime distress. Make no mistake. It is women, children, the disabled, and the elderly – the most vulnerable – who suffer most from war-related violence. Although often overlooked, this war is taking a tremendous psychological toll on the Ukrainian population. Apart from coping with the physical loss of homes, the obliteration of entire towns, and the complete disruption of normal daily living patterns, the psychological trauma caused by these tragedies is frequently underestimated. Through Malteser International and the Order's other resources, we are doing our best to address this issue.

We all know that the Ukrainian population is suffering immensely. We all know the consequences for Ukraine when civilians, non-military infrastructure, housing, and hospitals are targeted for destruction. We all know the damage that has been done, and continues to be done, to people who are deliberately targeted and terrorised. And we all know that, for many years to come, Ukrainians will live not only with physical disabilities, but also with deep psychological scars that will not heal easily or quickly.

As I said the dramatic traumas of the war on the most vulnerable segments of the population will, unfortunately, have long-lasting effects. We should be prepared to make the treatment of these traumas a priority for the foreseeable future, hopefully in the context of the reconstruction of Ukraine.

It is clear to us that, in any given situation, there is an unbreakable link between what we are able to do on the ground and the preservation and respect for International Law. Without the protective umbrella of International Law, particularly the principles and rules governing International Humanitarian Law, our crisis and relief work would be dangerously exposed to opponents. As such, let me make the position of the Sovereign Order of Malta absolutely clear in this regard. *We appeal to the provisions of International Humanitarian Law, and declare that the deliberate targeting of civilians and relief operators, as well as*

*the planned destruction of social services and infrastructure, are totally unacceptable.* No effort should be spared to reaffirm the imperatives of International Humanitarian Law and the principles of protecting human lives and dignity in all circumstances.

In light of the above, the Order of Malta firmly believes that the conflict in Ukraine should end as soon as possible and that war and devastation should give way to diplomacy and negotiation.

I commend the organisers for having included the human dimension as a fundamental component of this conference and one of the cornerstones of recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine. With respect to the human dimension of the war, we believe that there are several critical areas that should be of the highest priority. These are: the conditions of orphans and children; the need for ensuring the best and most comprehensive treatment of those left physically disabled; and the recognition and treatment of many psychological wounds that this tragic war has caused.

Bringing a just end to this conflict, an end that is based on international humanitarian principles, is a priority for everyone here today. I can assure you that The Order of Malta will continue to work toward this goal by supporting International Law and International Humanitarian Law, by deploying its resources on the

ground, and by lifting its voice in an international prayer for peace.

Thank you very much.