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## **PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER**

### ***Speaker of the House of Representatives chairs the high-level Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) session on the protection of children in armed conflict***

Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta, Anġlu Farrugia, in his capacity as President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), presided over the Committee's Open Session during the 150th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which is being held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The session, entitled "The Role of Parliaments in Tackling the Effects of Armed Conflict on Children", addressed the urgent need for stronger parliamentary engagement to prevent and respond to the devastating impact of armed conflict on children. With millions of children currently living in conflict zones worldwide, the Committee called for enhanced legislative, financial, and humanitarian action to safeguard their rights and wellbeing.

Speaker Farrugia emphasised the critical role of parliaments in upholding international humanitarian and human rights law. He noted that parliamentarians must act not only as legislators but also as advocates for the voiceless, ensuring that children affected by war receive protection, access to education, psychosocial support, and a pathway to a life of dignity and opportunity. He stressed that International humanitarian and human rights law are key to address these challenges and afford protection to children in this context. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are essential to protect children affected by armed conflict and advance their rights.

Speaker Farrugia pointed out that the role played by parliamentarians in this context cannot be underestimated. He stressed that parliamentarians build frameworks and preparedness by leading efforts towards accession or ratification of these instruments and by adopting laws that criminalise violence against children. The open session included four panellists, Mr. Fahad Ahmed, Legal Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Ms. Sophie Kiladze, Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Rejhana Dervišević, Member of the House of Representatives (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Gulnara Marufova, Member of the Senate (Uzbekistan).

On the margins of the Assembly, Speaker Anġlu Farrugia held bilateral meetings with Shalva Papuashvili, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, with Brahim Boughali, President of the People's National Assembly of Algeria and Nuriddin Ismailov, Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of Uzbekistan. Speaker Farrugia was accompanied by Ryan Callus, Member of Parliament, and Mr Ian Bajada.