



ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

685 3rd Ave., Ste. 1108, New York, NY 10017 • Tel: (212) 599-0950 • Fax: (212) 599-1020 • www.svg-un.org

Statement

By

H.E. Inga Rhonda King

Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

At the

**United Nations Security Council Monthly Briefing on the Middle East
(Yemen)**

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New York
United Nations Security Council

Thank you, Mr President,

I thank our briefers for their valuable updates. I also take this opportunity to reaffirm St. Vincent and the Grenadines' support for Mr. Martin Griffiths and his team, for their dedicated efforts towards a solution to the challenging situation in Yemen, and for their continued cooperation and coordination with the Council.

Mr Griffiths, you began your briefing this morning by stating that we are witnessing in Yemen what we have feared. The situation has become increasingly dire. Chilling words and like you Mr Griffiths we are distressed.

Mr. President,

Last month, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines pointed to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen and expressed our concerns over the restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid. It is unfortunate that we return to the Council, to these chilling reports one month later, where we remain troubled by the unprecedented threats that continue to persist. Mr. Ramesh Rajansinghman informed that access constraints affect 6.7 million people in need of assistance across the country. We have all heard, on several occasions, the various complaints about the treatment of humanitarian personnel, and listened to the briefings that emphasized the ways in which restrictions are paralyzing humanitarian operations. The people of Yemen have suffered enough and have lost too much – people have lost their livelihoods, children have lost their childhoods, parents have lost children, and this does not begin to scratch the surface. Yemen has been mired in conflict for too long, and the people cannot lose their last shreds of hope. The importance of sustaining

humanitarian assistance cannot be overstated, as the consequence of restricted access is prolonged suffering by many.

We recall the obligations under international humanitarian law that demand unhindered humanitarian access. It is in times of conflict, especially, that there can be no derogation from these sacrosanct principles. The international community must continue to engage with all parties to encourage active facilitation of safe and unhindered humanitarian access in accordance with humanitarian law.

It is in this vein that we welcome the efforts of the humanitarian community to collectively overcome these aforementioned challenges in order to maintain the delivery of humanitarian assistance to millions of Yemenis. As such, we recognise the recent conference of aid agencies and donors that took place in Brussels, where the immediate removal of all restrictions, obstructions and interferences violating humanitarian principles was called for. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wholeheartedly supports and reiterates this sentiment. We welcome and encourage all actions by parties that contribute to the easing of impediments to this life-saving assistance.

While humanitarian aid is critical, it is not the panacea - this assistance merely treats one of the symptoms of the conflict. What is needed for a sustainable and tenable solution is a comprehensive peace agreement. We call for the resumption of the desperately needed peace process, inclusive and reflective of all groups across the various categories in society. This is the only way to avoid a further unravelling of the conflict, which remains fragile, as evidenced by the stark deterioration in circumstances and intensification of tensions. Yemen remains an extremely multi-faceted and complex conflict with a wide range of actors; all of whom must come to

the negotiating table with the requisite political will to achieve the much needed, lasting peace that Yemenis deserve. We echo Mr Lowcock's sentiment that the situation is unacceptable.

Before I conclude, allow me to note Saint Vincent and the Grenadine's concern about the SAFER oil tanker. The potential environmental risks that we face are unprecedented, and far too great to allow inaction. There is an urgent need to address the issue, and we urge the immediate facilitation of required access to the tanker.

Mr. President,

Allow me to end on a positive note, by recognizing the efforts that are being made, as our acknowledgement of such is also critical in encouraging the parties to act. The facilitation, and official commencement of mercy flights is commendable, as well as the finalization of a plan to implement the prisoner exchange as per the Stockholm Agreement. These acts, that reflect a willingness to engage, are the acts that kindle and sustain the hope that Yemen can achieve peace.

Thank you.