



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

By

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Permanent Representative

The Situation in the Middle East (Syria – Political)

United Nations Security Council

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Please check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you Geir and Mark for your very comprehensive briefings. We join in expressing our sympathy to the families, relatives and friends of the two humanitarian Oxfam employees who lost their lives earlier today.

It was only 2 weeks ago that we sat in this Council to voice our shared concern about the situation in northwest Syria. We are here again today because the situation has continued to worsen. We echo our previous calls for an immediate and sustained cessation of all hostilities, as this is the only way to put an end to the suffering, which has sadly become a feature of everyday life for many Syrian people.

Continuing along the current military path will not end the current conflict. It will not accomplish the objectives of resolution 2254, it will not end the humanitarian crisis and it will not bring stability to Syria. What it will accomplish is the further displacement of civilians into dire conditions where they must fight to survive, the interruption of vital humanitarian aid and the loss of many more lives. It is for this reason that we once again express our support for the work of Special Envoy Pedersen. We recognize and applaud his recent efforts towards attaining a political solution by engaging in dialogue with the parties. As a staunch advocate for dialogue, it is our hope that it will lead to a de-escalation and the prevention of a full-scale military confrontation.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes all efforts to broker and uphold a ceasefire in Idlib, including through the Astana Format and through the United Nations. Indeed, any solution should include all concerned parties and the United Nations. In this vein, we welcome Special Envoy Pedersen's engagement with the

Astana guarantors. We applaud the Astana Guarantors earnest efforts and support the involvement of the United Nations.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines once again emphasizes the need for a credible, balanced and inclusive political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. This is the only viable route to lasting peace and stability.

Mr. President,

The presence of UN designated terrorist entities in the country presents legitimate local and regional security concerns that have necessitated military operations. However, we must remind parties that these operations do not absolve them of their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Measures aimed at building confidence are also key elements of the success of the political process. As such, the issue of missing and detained persons should be addressed to foster goodwill. Further, conditions must be created for the safe, dignified and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Syria and its people deserve security and to live in a state of calm. This conflict has taken too much from them and will continue to take from them if we fail in our responsibility to see that the suffering ends here.

I thank you.