



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

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**Statement**

by

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Counsellor**

**The Situation in the Middle East (Syria – Humanitarian)**

United Nations Security Council  
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I would like to welcome Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Alexander De Croo and we welcome again to the Chamber, H.E. Mr. Heiko Maas, Foreign Minister of Germany. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Mueller and Executive Director Fore for their briefings.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains extremely concerned by the humanitarian situation affecting millions of Syrians. The latest reports of aggressions are alarming, and they continue to compound an already dire humanitarian crisis. We yet again implore all parties to the conflict to exercise maximum restraint and to recommit to a ceasefire. We must also applaud the willingness of members of the international community to engage in dialogue on the escalating situation in the northwest.

The humanitarian emergency in Syria necessitates immediate action, this is underscored in the Secretary-General's bi-monthly report. Humanitarian actors therefore need to be facilitated by all parties to ensure timely, safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to all those in need, wherever they may be.

The crisis underscores the vital importance of the cross-border mechanism in maintaining the humanitarian response. We welcome the Secretary-General's report on the feasibility of alternative modalities to the Al Yarubiyah crossing. We take note that after careful consideration, the Tal Abyad border crossing has been designated as the most feasible alternative. It is our hope that this crossing will indeed be utilized and will be able to effectively assist in addressing the existing humanitarian deficits. We once again echo our support for Resolution 2504, and we will continue to remain in favour of the most optimal access arrangements.

Mr. President,

We acknowledge that there is a need for counter-terrorism operations to protect Syria's people and its sovereignty. However, we must once again remind all parties that these operations do not discharge them of their responsibilities under international law. Military operations should never be placed above the wellbeing of citizens. The protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure is

paramount, and all activities must respect the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

The reconstruction of Syria, especially of its medical and education facilities, is integral to the improvement of the humanitarian situation. We, therefore, encourage members of the international community to contribute to Syria's rebuilding. Without this critical infrastructure, internally displaced persons are forced to remain in overcrowded camps, bombed-out buildings and access to basic necessities will continue to be a far-off luxury. Further, reconstruction is a necessary component for the safe, dignified and voluntary return of millions of refugees. We also appeal to those countries who have imposed unilateral sanctions on Syria to engage in dialogue with the Syrian government on this issue, to aid the country in meeting its most urgent humanitarian needs.

The current humanitarian crisis will only continue to deteriorate in the absence of a political resolution to the conflict. It is for the Syrian people to determine their own destiny, without interference, in an inclusive process that meets their legitimate aspirations.

The humanitarian situation is at its worst. Too many people are consistently going without necessary services and children continue to be robbed of their childhood. There is nothing left for them to do and nowhere else left for them to go. The international community must reinforce the hope of the Syrian people through positive action to end this conflict and bring peace and stability back to Syria.

Thank you.