



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

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Statement

by

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

The Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

United Nations Security Council
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New York

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Thank you, Mr. President,

And Thanks to Special Coordinator Mladenov for his comprehensive briefing and we welcome his strong engagement.

We convene this meeting today amidst a tsunami of global challenges. The worst global pandemic in over a century continues to ravage us all, while the slow onset of the climate crisis leaves each of our countries with a cloud of uncertainty looming overhead. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines echoes the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. Now, more than ever, we must come together to fight these unseen enemies that lurk at each of our gates.

We note with concern the growing number of detected COVID19 cases in the occupied Palestinian territory. At the same time, we welcome the recent discussion between the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to coordinate efforts to combat the virus. Similarly, we welcome the recent meeting between UN Special Envoy, Nickolay Mladenov and the Middle East Quartet to discuss the prospects for peace negotiations and the current situation surrounding COVID-19.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines encourages the international community to support UNRWA's efforts to deal with COVID-19 in the Palestinian refugee community, including by contributing to the Flash Appeal.

In the midst of this global pandemic, we are concerned about the ongoing Israeli settlement throughout the Occupied Palestinian territory. We once again reiterate that the annexation of Palestinian land undermines the feasibility of a two-state solution and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law.

Article 56 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states that, “the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring and maintaining, with the cooperation of national and local authorities, the medical and hospital establishments and services, public health and hygiene in the occupied territory”. In this context, we call on Israel, the occupying power to ensure that all the necessary preventive means available to it are utilized to combat the spread of COVID-19.

Indeed, fighting this virus is one of the most urgent challenges facing us all today. We should be united in rising to the challenge. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its commitment to this international coalition.

I thank you.