



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

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Statement

by

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to the United Nations

Closed VTC Meeting on Humanitarian Situation in Venezuela

United Nations Security Council

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Thank you, Mr. President,

My delegation thanks Ms. Reena Ghelani, Director of Operations for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for her presentation.

Since the advent of the Bolivarian peoples' revolution at the start of the 21st Century, Venezuela has been a victim of an externally driven crusade of aggression that has been further intensified during the last five years. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines strongly condemns these acts of hostility which violate international law. We remain in solidarity with the government and heroic people of Venezuela, under the leadership of the democratically elected President, H.E. Nicholas Maduro.

With the COVID-19 wreaking havoc across the globe, we must cast aside all political and ideological differences and unite in our efforts to combat this deadly pandemic. We cannot speak to the humanitarian situation in Venezuela, without firstly addressing the illegal unilateral, and coercive sanctions imposed on our sister nation that serve to compound the humanitarian situation. On one hand, there is a call to address this humanitarian situation, yet on the other, a deafening silence reverberates when there is a call to lift the illegal unilateral sanctions.

Undoubtedly, Venezuela, like many other countries today, faces a range of challenges that are exacerbated by COVID-19. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is concerned about these difficulties.

Venezuela has been, and continues to be, deprived of much-needed resources due to the illegal blockade - to the tune of billions of dollars. This has not only affected the socio-economic

development of the country, but also the country's ability to procure medical equipment and supplies needed to adequately treat its population in the face of the pandemic. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Government and people of Venezuela continue to demonstrate their resolve in the fight against the pandemic. Moreover, Venezuela continues to demonstrate the real meaning of solidarity, by assisting countries in offering, not out of its surplus, but out of the little it has.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends the government's efforts to curb the pandemic and calls on the international community to redouble its efforts to provide support, beginning with the lifting of the blockade. Further, we firmly stress that any international assistance to Venezuela should comply with the principles of humanity, impartiality, and independence, and with the consent of the country's legitimate government.

Excellencies,

Let's be clear: to help the Venezuelan people, we must adhere to the sacrosanct body of international law enshrined in the UN Charter, lift all unilateral measures and desist from leveraging humanitarian aid in order to interfere with the internal political process. We emphasize that the unilateral sanctions imposed on Venezuela – similar to the illegal economic blockade inflicted against Cuba, work only to intensify the suffering of the Venezuelan people. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines renews its call for the international community to cooperate with the Venezuelan government during these difficult times. We also reiterate that the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular, those of sovereignty, non-interference and non-intervention must be respected.

Question for the briefer: • How have unilateral sanctions impacted the countries' ability to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?

I thank you.