



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

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Statement

by

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The Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

United Nations Security Council
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Mr. President,

Let me begin by joining others in thanking Secretary General António Guterres for his introductory remarks and Mr. Nickolay Vladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing. I also welcome President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine, Ambassador Danny Danon, the Permanent Representative of Israel and Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States to the Chamber this morning.

The moral purpose of our United Nations is to ensure freedom for all nations and peoples — for all states, big and small. The foundational pledge to respect the political independence and territorial integrity of *all* states is one which our forebears did not take lightly. They knew, all too well, that without mutual guarantees of sovereignty, the consequences would be anarchy and immense human suffering. For a small state like ours - that depends so heavily on a robust body of international law for our peaceful existence — it is particularly unnerving to witness the slow unravelling of these internationally agreed norms.

Indeed, one of the essential contributions to be made by small states like ours is the tireless advocacy for timeless principles enshrined in international law. We consider it our solemn obligation to not only articulate these principles, but to ensure that they are applied consistently and upheld in the international community as universal truths, rather than selective, uneven and unpredictable tools.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is deeply concerned about any attempts to deviate from the settled parameters governing the delicate quest for peace between Israel and Palestine. In this connection, we call for the full implementation of all relevant

Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for a cessation of all Israeli settlement activities, including those relating to Jerusalem and confirming that it is an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We wish to underscore that any measures aimed at altering the legal, geographic and demographic character and status of Jerusalem and of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a whole, are null and void and have no legal validity whatsoever.

While we acknowledge the ongoing efforts by the United States of America to reinvigorate the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains committed to the international community's longstanding, principled support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination, and for the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. This still reflects the will of the international community and ought to be our starting point. We will not solve the conflict by simply moving the internationally agreed goal post on an ever-increasingly uneven playing field. We therefore support the calls for the resumption of negotiations under these internationally agreed upon parameter.

Echoing too the Secretary General's call, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is also of the view that we must never foreclose on dialogue. There can be no real dialogue, and indeed no real solution, without all parties at the table. **But there is need for mediators acceptable to both** Israel and Palestine.

In the struggle for sustainable peace, we can claim no easy victories. Unresolved conflicts can only be addressed through equity and harmony. History has taught us that lasting peace can only be achieved through earnest attempts at reconciliation.

Indeed, there can be no peace without togetherness, and no togetherness without justice for all.

I thank you.