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to the United Nations**

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**Statement**

By

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Counsellor**

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

United Nations Security Council

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New York

Please check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. President. I would also like to thank Ms. Ghazi and Special Envoy Pedersen for their briefings. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continues to support the Special Envoy's determined efforts to facilitate the wider political process in Syria.

The creation of a safe and neutral environment, which cultivates trust and cooperation, is vital to the progress and success of the political process. In this regard, the March ceasefire agreement, although fragile, has created an opportunity for further meaningful engagement. It is our hope that this agreement will also encourage the full implementation of a lasting nationwide cessation of hostilities.

We take note that the Small Body of the Constitutional Committee is keen to proceed with its next session whenever the global situation allows. The Committee must maintain its momentum despite the current circumstances. We therefore encourage the recommencement of the important work, in as far as it is practicable to do so remotely.

To foster goodwill, we reiterate the need for constructive action on the issue of detainees, particularly in consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fate of missing persons must also be clarified.

Syria's socio-economic situation continues to deteriorate to the detriment of the Syrian people. We echo the appeal for the lifting of unilateral sanctions, to alleviate the burden and assist in strengthening the country's capacity to confront the pandemic.

Mr. President,

We continue to encourage the international community to contribute to Syria's reconstruction. The restoration of critical infrastructure is integral to the improvement of the humanitarian situation and is a necessary component for the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

The presence of Security Council designated terrorist entities continues to pose a substantial threat. We underscore the need for a collaborative approach to counter-terrorism efforts, which must comply with international law. At the same time, we emphasize that full respect for Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity dictates the withdrawal of all unauthorized foreign forces.

Mr. President,

Syria's only viable path towards peace is through a credible, balanced, and inclusive political process, that is free from interference and reflects the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. The international community must therefore continue to lend its support to ensure that the goals of Resolution 2254 are realized.

I thank you.