



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

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Statement

By

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Permanent Representative**

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

United Nations Security Council

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Thank you, Madam President and I would also like to thank our distinguished Judge and Prosecutor for their comprehensive briefings. We also join with others in expressing condolences to the families of the two security officers in Arusha, who sadly passed from COVID-19

Madam President,

The work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals remains an essential element in the fight against impunity, the protection and strengthening of the rule of law and the overall promotion of international justice. The importance of the Mechanism's activities, including those related to witness support and protection, the monitoring of cases referred to national jurisdictions, the preservation of archives and the provision of multi-faceted assistance to Member States, cannot be overstated.

We applaud the Mechanism for its commitment to ensuring operational continuity, despite the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has produced unavoidable delays in projected timelines for the completion of various judicial activities. However, we commend the Mechanism's efficiency in adapting its working methods to these circumstances. We also recognize the Mechanism's efforts to ensure the wellbeing persons in detention during this time. We are confident that despite the obstacles presented by COVID-19, disruptions will be minimized as far as possible and due process will be secured.

We take note of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. We are encouraged by its assessment that the Mechanism has fully implemented most of the recommendations contained in the 2018 report. Of particular significance is the evaluation that mechanism-wide gender balance was exceeded. Although some gaps remain, this achievement is admirable. We encourage efforts towards the fulfilment of the most recent recommendations.

We recognize and welcome the Mechanism's progress in the implementation of practices and procedures aimed at the harmonization of its two branches. The Mechanism continues to strive for optimization of activities, in the pursuit of achieving the Security Council's vision of a small, temporary and efficient structure.

We note the jurisprudential development concerning conditional early release of convicted individuals. The revised Practice Direction, which provides clear guidance of the procedure, is most welcomed.

Madam President,

The effectiveness and overall success of the Mechanism relies on the assistance and full cooperation of all Member States. In the absence of this, the tracking and apprehension of fugitives is severely impeded, the enforcement of judgments cannot be guaranteed, and victims are denied justice. We have a shared obligation to uphold the principles of international law. We cannot fall short in fulfilling this responsibility.

Within this context, we applaud the international cooperation which contributed to the successful arrest of Félicien Kabuga after twenty-three years as a fugitive. It was international cooperation too, which led to the confirmation of the death of the fugitive Augustin Bizimana. It is our hope that continued collaboration will lead to the location and arrest of all 6 remaining fugitives. Justice cannot be realized while perpetrators of the most serious crimes under international law remain at large.

International cooperation is further needed to facilitate the resettlement of those individuals who have been acquitted and released and are residing in Arusha. It is imperative that a lasting solution to this protracted matter is found.

Madam President,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines firmly denounces all forms of genocide denial and the glorification of convicted war criminals. This type of rhetoric disregards victims, hinders reconciliation and promotes dangerous ideologies.

In closing, we express our full support for the work of the Mechanism. Its role in the fight against impunity, the pursuit of accountability for mass atrocity crimes and the strengthening of the rules-based international system is fundamental to the maintenance of international peace and security.

I thank you.