



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

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**Statement**

by

**H.E. Sir Louis Straker**

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

At the

**Open VTC on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”**

United Nations Security Council

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New York

Mr. President,

Let me begin by thanking UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the briefers for their remarks on the evolving situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The long-cherished dream of peace in the Middle East is one we must continue to toil for, with the hopes that future generations of Palestinians and Israelis can work, play, study and pray alongside each other in a tranquil and tolerant atmosphere.

Mr. President,

Security is, at its very core, a collective project. It denotes a lasting relationship based on the foundational values of trust and respect, in which concerned parties choose peaceful coexistence over fear and coercion. It is in this regard that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stands firm in its condemnation of ongoing settlement activities across the West Bank, which constitute clear violations of international law that gravely imperil the peace process. The internationally agreed two-state solution based on pre-1967 border lines remains the most credible path on our painstaking quest for peace between Israel and Palestine. We implore the state of Israel to adhere to the provisions of all relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2334, which reflect the international community's posture on the occupied Palestinian territories.

Only through dialogue and compromise, respectful of the principles of international law, can security for Israel be assured, as Palestinian claims to dignity, equality, and human rights are honoured. History has taught us that lasting peace can only be achieved through sincere attempts at reconciliation, and reconciliation is only possible when justice and fairness paves the way to mutual satisfaction and harmony. As unilateral annexation of the West Bank looms, the narrow window for a sustainable peace is rapidly closing. Annexation would permanently alter the security landscape and destabilize the region. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines urges all parties to let good judgement and pragmatism prevail. We call on the state of Israel to immediately cease all plans for annexation, and return to the bargaining table to negotiate with their Palestinian neighbours in good faith. To this end, we encourage all members of the international community to facilitate this much-needed dialogue as the critical first step towards an equitable solution. We also encourage renewed international financial support to the UN agency for

Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) which provides vital humanitarian assistance and social protections to millions of Palestinian refugees. As such, we welcome the recently convened pledging conference to mobilize political and financial support for UNRWA.

Excellencies,

Today we stand at a dangerous cross-road. The core principles upon which our United Nations was founded are gradually eroding. On issues as complex and consequential as the fragile peace process in the Middle East, we can ill afford the ongoing repudiation of the bedrock principles of our multilateral system. The political independence and territorial integrity of *all* states must be safeguarded as we cast our collective gaze towards the urgent challenges of COVID-19 and the ever-growing climate crisis. During this 75th year of our United Nations, we must remain candid and upright in our pronouncements. Continued silence in the face of grave injustice, wheresoever and by whomsoever committed, is in itself the blank canvas upon which immense human suffering is rendered. At this critical juncture, we cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose; we must stand together, resolutely, and demand peace and justice for all.

I thank you.