



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

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Statement

By

**H.E. Inga Rhonda King
Permanent Representative**

The Situation in the Middle East (Syria – Political)

United Nations Security Council

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Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you Geir for your comprehensive briefing and for your tireless efforts to facilitate Syria's political process. I would also like to welcome our new Belgian Colleague PR, Ambassador Philippe Kridelka, we look forward to working with you.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains in full support of achieving a political solution, which is owned and led by the Syrian people and is in accordance with Resolution 2254. We, therefore, welcome next week's third session of the Constitutional Committee and it is our hope that it will be characterized by constructive engagement by all parties.

Regarding the country's security situation, we are concerned by the continued reports of sporadic violence despite the March ceasefire agreement. We urge all parties to abide by the ceasefire, to exercise maximum restraint and we reiterate the call for a complete and immediate nationwide cessation of hostilities.

Further, we remind parties to the conflict that military and counter-terrorism operations, although necessary for the protection of Syria and the region, must comply with the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Distinction, proportionality, and precaution ought to guide all activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic compounds the urgency for lasting peace and stability in Syria. Unfortunately, there has been an upsurge in cases in recent weeks and due to limited testing capacity, we do not know the true number. A widespread outbreak of COVID-19 would undoubtedly be devastating to the country, especially since the healthcare system has been debilitated by conflict. Nationwide calm will allow for a more robust response to the pandemic.

Mr. President,

The Syrian economy is in danger of collapse. A decade-long civil war has led to a precarious socio-economic situation and unilateral coercive measures have intensified the burden. As always, we continue to call for the lifting of all unilateral coercive measures, which are inconsistent with

international law, frustrate efforts at stabilizing and revitalizing the economy and now have the potential to undermine Syria's pandemic response.

We remain troubled by the unresolved issues of detainees, abductees, and missing persons. Meaningful action on these matters must be prioritized, especially in consideration of the pandemic. Furthermore, their effective resolution will certainly go a long way towards confidence building and reconciliation, in furtherance of the political process.

Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity must be respected and should never be rejected in favor of acts of aggression and foreign occupation. The hope of the Syrian people lies within the actions of the international community. We must seek common ground, we must be pragmatic and principled, and we must not fail them.

Before closing, Mr President, it is with profound sadness that we recall the devastating August 4th blasts in Beirut, Lebanon. We express our deepest condolences to the Lebanese people and to the families of the many Syrian refugees who also lost their lives in this terrible tragedy. We also wish Deputy Special Envoy Matar a speedy recovery.

I thank you.