



**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 - Humanitarian)**

United Nations Security Council

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Please check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you ASG Rajasingham for your briefing.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains alarmed by the dire humanitarian situation in Syria. The amalgamation of conflict, economic downturn and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has considerably intensified the humanitarian emergency and the scale of human suffering.

The Cross-Border Mechanism therefore remains a critical component of the humanitarian response and we continue to support its operation. We take note of the most recent report of the Secretary-General, which highlights, among other matters, that cross-border aid deliveries face considerable challenges including having to travel longer distances. It is evident that the mechanism must be strengthened and optimized to ensure its effectiveness in providing timely, safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access, in coordination with the Syrian government and in line with the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance. The scaling up of the cross-line modality must also be prioritized to assist in filling the existing gaps.

Syria's declining socio-economic situation is a cause for concern. Millions are now food insecure, with millions more on the brink. Basic commodities are out of reach due to hyperinflation, and as a result, many Syrians have resorted to negative coping mechanisms. Amid the challenges, COVID-19 cases are on the rise with nearly one-third of all active cases requiring hospitalization. Syria's healthcare system was already in a fragile state prior to the emergence of the pandemic and a major outbreak of the virus will undoubtedly be devastating to the country.

On this point, we yet again appeal for the lifting of all unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria. These measures undermine the country's capacity to fight the pandemic and further burdens the moribund economy.

We echo the Special Envoy's call for a nationwide ceasefire to end the violence, to preserve critical civilian infrastructure and to enable humanitarian actors to effectively carry out their important work. We urge parties to the conflict to respect the ceasefire in the northwest and to exercise maximum restraint. We also remind parties that all military and counter-terrorism activities must comply with the fundamental principles of armed conflict.

Mr. President,

The Alouk water station continues to face numerous interruptions, leaving almost half a million civilians without its vital supply, including those residing in the densely populated Al Hol camp. A sustainable solution to this increasingly troubling issue must be found, especially in consideration of the pandemic.

Reconstruction is inextricably linked to the improvement of the country's humanitarian situation. It is also a necessary requirement for the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of refugees and IDPs. We therefore continue to encourage members of the international community to contribute to the country's reconstruction efforts.

The humanitarian situation is distressing, and it will not improve in the absence of a political resolution to the conflict. The wellbeing of the Syrian people is paramount. They deserve peace and stability. The international community must continue to engage constructively towards a political solution with the Syrian people at forefront.

I thank you.