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Statement

By

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The Situation in the Middle East (Syria – Political)

United Nations Security Council

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Thank you, Mr. President and thank you Special Envoy Pedersen for your briefing.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines once again expresses our support for the tireless efforts of the Special Envoy in facilitating Syria's political process. We are pleased, that despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Small Body of the Constitutional Committee was able to meet at the end of August and that the discussions were characterized by respect and a commitment by the parties to work together. We look forward to the convening of the fourth session and we hope that an agreement on the agenda will be arrived at soon. We also remind parties of the importance of women's participation in the work of the Committee to ensure fair and balanced outcomes for all Syrians.

The success of the wider political process is dependent on the cultivation of trust and confidence. In this vein, we reiterate the urgent need to address in a meaningful way the issues of detainees, abductees, and missing persons in a demonstration of goodwill and to promote reconciliation within Syria.

Resolution 2254 acknowledges the close linkage between a ceasefire and the parallel political process. The perpetuation of hostilities therefore denies an environment conducive to the fulfillment of the process and the restoration of stability. For this reason, the continued reports of sporadic violence are concerning. Maximum restraint must be exhibited and the preservation of the ceasefire in the northwest is critical. Above all, the implementation of a complete and immediate nationwide cessation of hostilities is essential.

The country's stability is also tied to its economic recovery. Syria's rapid socio-economic downturn is alarming and threatens the wellbeing of millions of Syrians. We yet again appeal for the lifting of all unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria to assist with the country's rehabilitation, especially in consideration of the current humanitarian situation which is made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity is endangered by the continued occupation of unauthorized foreign forces and the prevailing threat of Security Council designated terrorist

entities. Respect for Syria's independence necessitates the withdrawal of these forces and the eradication of the scourge of terrorism. On the point of counter terrorism, we reiterate that these activities must comply with the fundamental principles of international law. The protection of civilians and objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population must remain paramount.

An inclusive, credible and sustainable Syrian-owned and Syrian-led political process, that is free from interference, is the only solution to end the current conflict. It is the only path towards restoring peace and stability to the Syrian people. The international community must therefore continue to support all efforts to realize this goal.

Thank you, Mr. President.