



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

685 3rd Ave., Suite 1108, New York, NY 10017 • Tel: (212) 599-0950 • Fax: (212) 599-1020 •

svgmission@gmail.com | <http://svg-un.org>

Statement

By

**Diani Jamesha Prince
Counsellor**

The Situation in the Middle East (Syria – Humanitarian & Political)

United Nations Security Council

27 October 2020

New York

Please check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. President and thank you Special Envoy Pedersen and Under Secretary-General Lowcock for your thorough briefings.

Syria's political and humanitarian situations are undoubtedly interconnected. The country's humanitarian issues will not improve in the absence of peace and stability, which can only be achieved through a credible, balanced and inclusive Syrian-owned and Syrian-led political process.

To this end, it is crucial that the Constitutional Committee sustain its momentum. We look forward to the convening of the next session and we hope that the co-chairs will reach an agreement on the agenda soon, to enable discussions to recommence without delay. The Committee can indeed assist in facilitating the wider political process and we reiterate the need for the engagement of all relevant parties, including women, to ensure a sustainable and equitable peace for all Syrians. In this vein, we reaffirm our support for the continued efforts of the Special Envoy.

We welcome the Secretary-General's most recent report, and we note, with regret, the violations of the ceasefire, recorded almost daily, in the northwest. Hostilities undermine the ceasefire agreement, harm civilians, obstruct the urgent humanitarian response and destroy objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. It is imperative that parties to the conflict respect the agreement and we remind them of their obligation to strictly comply with the requirements of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Accountability for acts committed in violation must remain a high priority.

We remain concerned by the outstanding issues of detainees and missing persons. We echo the call for the release of all arbitrarily detained civilians, particularly, women and children. Further, the families of those who are missing deserve to know the fate of their loved ones. These actions will also certainly contribute to confidence building and reconciliation within Syria, in furtherance of the political process.

Mr. President,

Syria's worsening socio-economic condition, *exacerbated by the severe economic downturn and the global pandemic*, is alarming. The country is battling food insecurity and basic commodities are out of reach. Our concern for the Syrian people is heightened as winter approaches, bringing with it a plethora of new humanitarian needs and challenges. We therefore continue to support the cross-border mechanism and we urge all parties to work in partnership to scale up the critical humanitarian response, utilizing all available modalities and in line with humanitarian principles. We further appeal for the lifting of all unilateral coercive measures, which may adversely affect the humanitarian response and the country's already burdened economy.

Regarding internally displaced persons, we emphasize that their return to places of origin or resettlement in new areas must be voluntary, safe, dignified and fully informed. Further, we renew our call for the international community to contribute to Syria's reconstruction efforts. Without this assistance, IDPs and refugees will have nothing to return to and civilians will be forced to remain without essential infrastructure.

Syria will only be able emerge from this conflict and start the long process of recovery with the steadfast support of the international community. We must, therefore, have a pragmatic and holistic approach when discussing the complex matters affecting the country and its people.

I thank you.