



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

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**Statement**

By

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**Deputy Permanent Representative**

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

United Nations Security Council

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I thank Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Rajasingham and Deputy Special Envoy Ms. Matar for their briefings.

A complex and inextricably linked relationship exists between Syria's humanitarian and political situations. Lack of progress on the political track gives rise to further deterioration of the already dire humanitarian situation. This deterioration subsequently impedes efforts at attaining a political resolution to the protracted conflict. As such, it is necessary to have a holistic and pragmatic approach.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its support for the efforts of the Special Envoy and the work of the Constitutional Committee. We welcome the announcement of a fourth session of the Small Body of the Committee at the end of November and we encourage all members to participate in good faith for the benefit of all Syrians. The work of the Committee remains a critical step in the wider political process.

Addressing the outstanding issues of detainees and missing persons is also essential to the advancement of the wider process and will undoubtedly contribute to confidence building and reconciliation within Syria. We urge renewed and purposeful action in this regard.

We take note of the "International Conference on Return of Syrian Refugees", which took place earlier this month in Damascus. We welcome and encourage constructive engagement and cooperation by key stakeholders and the wider international community, in an effort to make meaningful progress on this critical issue. The creation of conditions necessary for the safe, voluntary, dignified and well-informed return of refugees and internally displaced persons includes the reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. We yet again appeal to the international community to contribute to this effort.

We are extremely concerned by the reports of sporadic violence in the northwest, in violation of the March ceasefire agreement. All parties must exercise maximum restraint and adhere to the agreement to ensure the protection of civilians, civilian infrastructure and the sustained provision of humanitarian aid. Further, counter-terrorism and other military activities must comply with

international human rights law and international humanitarian law and we remind all parties, *as has been said many times over*, that there is no military solution to the conflict.

Syria's socio-economic deterioration persists and is made worse by the global pandemic. Food insecurity is a constant threat and basic necessities remain out of reach. We are especially concerned for the millions of Syrians residing in various camps and other informal settlements that lack the means to implement necessary protective measures against COVID-19. We echo the call for the lifting of **all** unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria to assist the country in meeting its pressing humanitarian needs, *especially as winter approaches*, and to allow it to successfully respond and emerge from the pandemic.

We reiterate our steadfast support for the cross-border mechanism, which continues to be a lifeline for millions of Syrians. It is therefore imperative that cross-border and cross-line assistance be scaled up to meet the vast humanitarian needs, in line with humanitarian principles.

The only path out of the Syrian conflict is through a political process that puts the Syrian people at the forefront and demonstrates respect for the country's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, through the withdrawal of all unauthorized foreign forces and the consideration of the perspectives of all Syrians.

After enduring the effects of a decade of war, the Syrian people deserve peace and stability. The international community must lend all necessary support towards the achievement of this goal.

Before concluding we wish to express our condolences to the Syrian Arab Republic on the passing of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, His Excellency Mr. Walid Al Muallem. We also congratulate His Excellency Dr. Bashar Ja'afari on his appointment as Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I thank you.