



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

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Statement

By

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At the

United Nations Security Council VTC Briefing (UANMI)

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We extend our gratitude to Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasscheart for her insightful briefing this morning.

First, we join other Council members in condemning the attack over the weekend just north of Baghdad. We offer our condolences to the Government and people of Iraq over the lives lost.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expresses its support for the Government of Iraq, as it prepares for early elections next year, and we recognize the supportive role played by UNAMI in this regard. We also welcome the government's commitment to the empowerment of women, and advancement of their political, economic and social participation, as highlighted in the SG's report.

The challenges of 2020 have left no-one unscathed, but as leaders, we have a responsibility to assist those more vulnerable than us, wherever we can, and assuage their suffering. In the context of Iraq, the plight of its citizens must remain a priority. This means that perpetrators of attacks on civilians must be held accountable, including those responsible for ISIL attacks that resulted in numerous deaths and injuries. The targeted killings of members of civil society, including political and human rights activists, is unacceptable and must not be allowed to continue with impunity. It cannot be overstated that accountability is a critical tenet of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The COVID-19 pandemic demands from us a coordinated response. This is not a threat that we can successfully tackle independently. In this regard, we recognize the role of the WHO in assisting the Iraqi government, including their donation of ambulances to ensure that persons in remote locations receive support. We express concern over the impact that the virus has had on the people of Iraq, as well as the economy and delivery of basic services. To that end, we recognize the UN country team's efforts that led to the completion of the socio-economic response plan for Iraq to bridge the gap between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts; however, it is disheartening to have read in the SG's report that the Humanitarian Response Plan and the COVID-19 fund remain insufficiently financed. We appeal to the international community to step up its efforts to assist the people of Iraq during these extraordinary times.

We close by welcoming the continued cooperation that has taken place between Iraq and Kuwait on the search for missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, particularly in light of COVID-19-related challenges. We recognize the roles played by UNAMI and the ICRC in supporting this process, and encourage further endeavours towards resolving this issue.

Thank you.