



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

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Statement

by

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to the United Nations

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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At the outset, I would like to thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his comprehensive presentation on the sixteenth quarterly report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) (S/2020/1234).

As the body charged with maintaining international peace and security, all too often the Security Council fails to fulfil its responsibility through its inaction and inability to protect Palestinians living under occupation. It is imperative that this Council facilitate the resumption of talks between both parties, towards the achievement of a viable two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

The goal of a two-state solution is under serious threat today. Throughout 2020 the international community has seen the continuation and expansion of settlements, settler violence, access restrictions, the demolition of homes and other structures, and the evictions of families across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. As we look forward to 2021, we call for an end to all illegal activities, and for the full adherence to international law, as well as the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). Similarly, we reiterate President Abbas call on the United Nations to convene an international conference in early 2021 to launch “a genuine peace process” between Israel and the Palestinians.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains concerned about attacks against civilians, particularly those directed against children in the occupied Palestinian territory. The reported killing of a 14-year-old Palestinian boy, as highlighted in a recent letter to the President of the Council, leaves a stain on the conscience of the international community. We use this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to upholding the principles enshrined within the Convention on the Rights of the Child. And we call on all parties to fully respect international law,

international humanitarian law, the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention and other international conventions.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, we welcome the recent launch of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) on 17 December and encourage the international community to contribute to this plan, in an effort to help people made vulnerable in the Occupied Palestinian territory. We also commend UNRWA's efforts to provide critical services to 5.7 million Palestinian refugees across the Middle East, amidst a growing crisis that is made worse by the pandemic. We appeal to the international community to provide much-needed assistance to Palestinian refugees through this important Agency.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that there can be no comprehensive and lasting peace without resolving the decades-long conflict on the basis of the 4 June 1967 borders with agreed land swaps. The two-state solution must remain the primary focal point for any future talks. In this connection, we reaffirm our commitment to the two-state solution and reiterate that any annexation of territory in the West Bank severely undermines prospects for lasting peace.

Before closing, I take this opportunity to thank you, Special Coordinator Mladenov, for your important work on the Middle East Peace Process over the past five to six years. We wish you much, much success in your new assignment.

I thank you.