



**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

**H.E. Inga Rhonda King
Permanent Representative**

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

United Nations Security Council

20 January 2021

New York

Please check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. President and I thank Under Secretary-General Lowcock and Special Envoy Pedersen for their usual informative briefings.

Syria's humanitarian crisis and its resultant socio-economic downturn continues to be a source of profound concern. As the Syrian pound depreciates, food insecurity and shortages of other essential commodities increases, placing the Syrian people in a perilous position. Humanitarian aid therefore remains a critical lifeline for millions, particularly those residing in overcrowded IDP camps, and especially in these harsh winter months and in consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, aid access facilitated by the Cross-Border Mechanism, as well as other indispensable modalities, are vital to the humanitarian response - yet still require significant scale up and enhancement to ensure that those in need of support are able to receive it in line with the humanitarian principles and in a timely, safe, sustained and unimpeded manner.

Geir [Pedersen] likened the confluence of circumstances in Syria to a slow tsunami. Intrinsicly related to the issue of Syria's socio-economic downturn is that of the imposition of unilateral coercive measures. We continue to appeal for the lifting of these measures, which are not only incompatible with international law but also undermine the country's capacity to combat the pandemic.

The protection of civilians, civilian infrastructure and the maintenance of an effective humanitarian response require an immediate nationwide cessation of hostilities, as called for by the Special Envoy. There is no military solution to the conflict and we strongly urge parties to exercise maximum restraint and to fully respect the ceasefire in the northwest. While we recognize the substantial threat posed by the scourge of terrorism, we remind parties that all counter-terrorism and other military activities must comply with the enduring principles of international law. Distinction, proportionality and precaution ought to guide all actions.

Mr. President,

The only sustainable solution to the protracted conflict and its attendant humanitarian crisis remains through an inclusive Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. In pursuit of this durable and sustained resolution, the work of the Constitutional Committee remains an essential component. We therefore continue to encourage all parties to negotiate in a spirit of compromise to make tangible progress during the upcoming fifth session. We also reiterate our support for the steadfast efforts of the Special Envoy in this regard.

The viability of the political process also requires the undertaking of meaningful confidence building measures to foster good will and facilitate reconciliation. As such, it is imperative that the outstanding issues of detainees and missing persons are urgently addressed to encourage further progress.

In conclusion, we appeal to the international community to take pragmatic steps to assist Syria towards restoring peace and stability. Such steps include the withdrawal of all unauthorized foreign forces in respect for Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and by contributing to Syria's reconstruction, as the restoration of the country's critical infrastructure will undoubtedly assist in alleviating the overall humanitarian situation. The wellbeing of the Syrian people ought to remain at the forefront of all actions, for it is they who continue to suffer the consequences of the conflict.

I thank you.