



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

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Statement

By

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Syria (Chemical Weapons)

United Nations Security Council

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As delivered

Thank you, Mr. President and congratulations to Tunisia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month. I also thank High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Nakamitsu, for her briefing.

As this is our first meeting for 2021, we welcome our colleagues from India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway to the Council. We look forward to working with you this year.

I begin by restating Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' well-established position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances constitutes a reprehensible violation of international law. Perpetrators of chemical weapons atrocities should not be allowed to operate with impunity and must be held accountable.

The weaponizing of toxic chemicals is unquestionably one of the great threats to international peace and security. For this reason, we continue to support the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its continued efforts at ensuring that we achieve our collective vision of a world free of chemical weapons. Further, we support all efforts to strengthen the Organization's capacity to ensure that the quality of its work remains of the highest standard.

As the implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW must take all necessary steps to ensure that the Organization and its various subsidiary bodies are beyond reproach. The important work of the OPCW must therefore remain impartial, transparent and should never be politicized. Its findings must be capable of withstanding rigorous scrutiny to foster and sustain trust among states parties and the OPCW. Additionally, consensus-based decisions ought to be pursued to prevent further polarization and divisiveness and to promote international cooperation.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has created many obstacles, we commend the OPCW and Syria for remaining actively engaged and continuing the work in as far it is possible to do so remotely. The issue of the unresolved gaps and inconsistencies in the original declaration remains and we

are hopeful that continued dialogue between the parties will assist in further cultivating a spirit of cooperation to make certain that meaningful progress in made is this regard.

The Security Council ought not to overlook the many notifications by the Syrian government regarding the preparations of armed groups to use chemical weapons and to stage chemical weapons attacks. We reiterate that this Council has an obligation to give this matter due attention to make an assessment in the interest of civilian protection and to ensure that principles of international law are upheld and consistently applied.

Our goal to prevent the development, stockpiling, transfer or use of chemical weapons to better protect the future of humanity requires both the full implementation of resolution 2118 and a committed partnership with the OPCW. The Security Council and indeed the entire international community must work together to find common ground to fulfil this responsibility.

Thank you.