



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

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Statement

by

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**Arria Formula Meeting - Upholding the Collective Security System of the UN
Charter: The Use of Force in International Law, Non-State Actors and
Legitimate Self-Defense**

Security Council

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New York

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Thank you, Chair,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes today's discussion and we thank the Permanent Mission of Mexico for hosting this meeting. We also thank our esteemed briefer, Prof. Naz Modirzadeh, for her remarks.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into closer focus the intrinsic value of our multilateral system. At a time when many nations, the world over, face alarming uncertainties over the health and well-being of their societies, the norms and rules of international law offer the greatest assurance against disorder.

As a matter of principle, our delegation emphasizes that all states have the right to act in self-defence, as a last resort, if and only when absolutely necessary and with proportionality. Notwithstanding, the fundamental principles of non-intervention, non-interference, and the pacific settlement of disputes, as outlined in the UN Charter, should guide all states in their efforts to cooperate constructively and peacefully coexist.

Any derogation from these universally accepted norms, *wheresoever and by whomsoever committed*, severely undermines the ideals of multilateralism embodied in our United Nations. For this reason, our delegation maintains that all forms of unilateral action, whether through militarism or any other form of coercion, should be abandoned; while dialogue, diplomacy and other participatory tools,

such as mediation, are pursued. These are the primary pathways to peace and security.

To be sure, there are some contexts within which states may be compelled to use force to protect civilians, dispel non-state armed groups, and defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, there can be no viable substitute for collective action in the pursuit of just, lasting and equitable outcomes. To this end, we underscore the important role of regional cooperation in addressing cross-border challenges, such as terrorism, in a manner which privileges the relevant provisions of international law, including international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law.

To conclude, our delegation underscores that security has always been and will continue to remain a collective project. When parties build trust and mutual respect, guided by the norms and rules of multilateralism rather than by fear or coercion, peace and stability will flourish.

Thank You.