



**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 of St. Vincent and the
Grenadines to the United Nations

At the

**United Nations Security Council VTC Briefing on the Middle East
(Yemen)**

February 18, 2021
New York
United Nations Security Council

Thank you, Madam President,

We also thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and USG Mark Lowcock for their briefings. We welcome, indeed we applaud, the important work being undertaken by you and your respective teams.

“I am saddened”, so began Martin this morning. I am disheartened. Indeed, we remain deeply concerned that the humanitarian situation continues to be dire and is worsening. While the threat of famine is looming for some, it is already a reality for others. We hope that the positive momentum that comes from the reversal of the Houthi designation will facilitate continued imports of essential commodities into Yemen and have a tangible impact on the ground. [We applaud the United States, in this regard]. Notwithstanding this, additional funding for the humanitarian response plan and support for the economy are necessary. We express, with very heavy hearts, our concern that more than 2 million Yemeni children under the age of 5 are expected to endure acute malnutrition by the end of 2021. We echo the remarks of Mr. David Beasley, who underscored that “each malnourished child also means a family struggling to survive.” **To that end, we welcome the virtual High-Level Pledging Event that will be held on March 1st, and urge donors, including countries in the region, to consider stepping up their contributions, and to ensure that their pledges are disbursed as soon as possible.**

We express concern that violence is continuing, including in Hodeidah. **This will undermine the political dialogue.** Moreover, the recent military escalation in Marib is very alarming, as it threatens to exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, and puts millions of civilians, including internally displaced persons, at risk. We appeal to all actors within Yemen to work with each other and with the Special Envoy, in good faith, and refrain from destabilizing actions. The gains achieved by military means will only get us so far, but then comes the political dialogue, which is the only viable path to sustainable peace, security and prosperity. The parties must not delay engagement. Political negotiations must resume, and alongside this, there must be safe and unhindered humanitarian access in accordance with the humanitarian principles. All of these issues are dealt with in the Special Envoy's proposed Joint Declaration, and this is why it must be concluded with the deepest sense of urgency. **We emphasize that the only solution is a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process, inclusive of the plurality of voices within Yemen. In this regard, we call on members of the international community to play their part and support the people of Yemen. This demands that all member states cease the transfer of weapons to parties within Yemen whether directly or through proxies/third parties. Similarly, other forms of assistance, which enables attacks on the different sides, must stop.**

We call for renewed commitment to the Stockholm and Riyadh Agreements. The newly formed Cabinet was an important breakthrough and we encourage the parties to work together to further fulfil their obligations. We welcome reports that the parties have resumed discussion on a prisoner exchange, and recognise the continued efforts of the ICRC in this process. This is a vital confidence-building measure, which creates an atmosphere that bolsters the parties' ability and willingness to honour their other commitments. The most recent prisoner exchange was evidence that the parties can work together constructively to advance efforts towards peace.

We close by calling for urgent progress on the SAFER oil tanker. This issue remains outstanding, despite the countless efforts to undertake, and prepare for, an assessment mission. We appeal to all relevant parties to avoid politicization of this issue, and to prioritize the environment and the people of Yemen and the wider Red Sea region. The timeline for deployment of the mission remains uncertain as Mark reminded in his briefing earlier. As such, we urge for transparency and increased communication between the parties, so that further delay can be avoided. As Mark rightly underscored this is *a clear and present danger to everybody*.

We reaffirm our support to the people of Yemen and to our briefers. Our special envoy implores us —politics will come later, now, the Yemeni people must come first. The violence must stop, the conflict must end. Please, we implore all to heed this call.

Thank you.