



**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. Dr. Halimah DeShong

Second Deputy Permanent Representative

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

United Nations Security Council
25 March 2021
New York

Thank you, Madame President. I also thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his thorough briefing on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) and for his commitment to the Middle East Peace Process.

We are meeting again at a critical juncture. As Israeli settlement activities continue, it is crucial that the Security Council, reflecting the will of the international community, clearly condemn these illegal acts and declare them null and void.

The Security Council must affirm respect for the vital principles of international law. In particular, it must, by all appropriate means at its disposal, safeguard the territorial integrity of the State of Palestine, and promote a peaceful settlement of the decades-long dispute.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms the need for a negotiated two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in line with all relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2334, international law and internationally agreed parameters. In our view, any unilateral actions will undermine the foundations and the viability of the two-State solution. My delegation therefore urges Israeli and Palestinian leaders to restart meaningful direct talks and negotiations with the objective of achieving a comprehensive settlement and establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Turning to the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates its call for the full implementation of this and previous resolutions on the question of Palestine. According to OCHA, as of 21 March 2021, Israel's policy of home demolitions has resulted in destruction of 291 Palestinian-owned structures, resulting in the displacement of 443 people, including children, from their homes across the West Bank. These actions are contrary to international law. Moreover, these demolitions contravene the United Nations Charter, which prohibits the acquisition of territory by force, as well as the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention.

We note, with great concern, the dire humanitarian, economic and political situation in Gaza, which has been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. We applaud the delivery of 61,400 vaccines to the Palestinian Authority through the United Nations COVAX program and appeal to the international community to deliver promised vaccines to the Palestinians. Additionally, we urge Israel to end the blockade of Gaza and to allow unhindered access to humanitarian assistance and goods.

Equally, we reiterate our strong support for UNRWA, which requires renewed international financial provision, to assist and protect millions of Palestinian refugees.

We are encouraged by the relevant Palestinian parties' recent steps to prepare for the legislative, presidential and Palestinian National Council elections slated for 22 May, 31 July and 31 August, respectively. These democratic exercises will bolster the peace process. It is imperative that these elections be held throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

My delegation welcomes the conference call held between the Envoys of the Middle East Quartet on the 23rd of March. We also encourage the Quartet to support President Abbas' call for an international conference, take affirmative steps to address the threats that are imperilling the two-state solution, and offer practical recommendations to enable an eventual

return to meaningful negotiations, in order to end the occupation and establish an independent Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Finally, as a state party to the Rome Statute, we reaffirm our support to the International Criminal Court in all of its work. We note with concern the reported confiscation of the travel pass of the Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs and call for reason and justice to prevail.

Allow me to conclude by underscoring that it is high time for the Security Council to adopt a clear stance with respect to the annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and to give top priority in its concerns to the basic objective, which is to achieve a just and comprehensive peace, based on the Arab Peace Initiative and UN resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016).

I thank you.