



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

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Statement

By

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to the United Nations

At the

**Arria Formula meeting – Delivering Accountability through Innovation and
Partnership: Harnessing technology to deliver justice for war crimes, crimes
against humanity and genocide**

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New York
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Thank you to the co-hosts and co-sponsors for convening this important Arria formula meeting and to the briefers for their insightful remarks, particularly Ms. Murad for her very personal testimony and call to action.

Accountability for crimes against humanity is critical for victims, survivors and for a well-functioning society. We commend UNITAD's approach to its tasks, which harnessed technology and innovation. Victims and survivors of ISIL crimes deserve nothing less on the road to justice. We also commend the Iraqi Government for its constructive approach and commitment to justice.

UNITAD's conscientious efforts have allowed the Team to finalise case briefs on attacks committed by ISIL against the Yazidi community, and the mass killing of unarmed air force cadets in Tikrit. The finalisation of these case briefs will enable UNITAD to better support national authorities in their investigation and prosecution of ISIL crimes. We welcome these positive developments.

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Team's reduced footprint in Iraq, UNITAD has adopted ground-breaking approaches to ensure the sustained discharge of its mandate. UNITAD has harnessed technology to enhance its evidence processing capabilities, more effectively filter and analyse the content of material, protect staff and, through a number of innovations, has broadened the range of witnesses able to engage with UNITAD and provide their accounts, including through conducting remote interviews.

Throughout this process, UNITAD has maintained a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach, including through its Witness Protection and Support Unit that aims to enhance the provision of psychosocial support to witnesses, particularly women and child survivors. The *Shuhud* platform, developed to allow witnesses and survivors to submit information remotely, securely and confidentially, should be replicated.

Another critical aspect of UNITAD's work, and success thus far, has been its emphasis on forging partnerships, first and foremost with the Iraqi Government. An unyielding commitment to getting the job done has led to partnerships with Microsoft Cooperation to apply Artificial Intelligence in the investigations as well as with the Iraqi Mass Grave Directorate and the Medico Legal Directorate to identify mass graves. A further partnership with the United Nations Mine Action Service served to protect those carrying out this work in the field.

We welcome the launch today of the publication "Harnessing Advanced Technology in International Criminal Investigations". This handbook will serve as an invaluable tool for other investigations into international crimes. It is our hope that more innovative approaches will follow and it is important to document them.

Thank you.