



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

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Statement

by

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Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations

At the

**Joint Debate under agenda items 37 entitled “The situation in the Middle
East” and 38 entitled “Question of Palestine”**

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Mr. Vice President, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I begin my remarks today with a quote from Malcolm X. *“Peace and freedom cannot be separated because no one can be at peace unless he or she already has his freedom”*. Peace in the Middle East will remain both elusive and illusory unless the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people are fully recognized and upheld. Their pain and suffering, endured on a protracted quest for peace and freedom, remains an unfortunate stain on the international community.

An immediate ceasefire is the urgent imperative. And we welcome the announcement from Israeli Media that the Israeli Cabinet has just approved a cease-fire in Gaza.

Hundreds have died and thousands more have been injured following the recent escalations across the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expresses its deepest concerns, solidarity, and firm condemnation over these abhorrent developments. As a matter of moral principle and of international law, all parties must work swiftly and collectively to de-escalate tensions, to prevent further civilian casualties and address the dire and urgent humanitarian needs of the people affected by this crisis.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines calls on the parties to return to direct negotiations to find a lasting solution to this conflict. Future

generations of Palestinians deserve to live, work, and pray in peace and security within the contiguous borders of their own country, and alongside a prosperous and secure State of Israel. The injustices meted out to the State of Palestine must end now.

It is vitally important that all sides uphold and fully respect the integrity and status quo of the holy sites. Additionally, it is time that the international community revisit the question of Palestine's full membership to the United Nations. The recognition of the State of Palestine's legitimate sovereignty and statehood is long overdue and forms an essential component of the Two-State Solution which remains the only viable path to peace and stability. We also underscore the urgent need for the international community to respond swiftly and generously to the emergency appeals by UNRWA to address the most pressing humanitarian needs in the Palestinian territories, particularly in Gaza Strip.

Mr. President,

The besiegement of Gaza, since 2007, continues to inflict a severe cumulative toll on all aspects of life in the occupied territory. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines calls, yet again, on Israel, the occupying power, to immediately and unconditionally lift this blockade as an essential step towards addressing the humanitarian crisis. The unquestionable right of Israel to exist in peace and defend itself does

not and cannot give it unfettered licence to occupy, oppress and suppress the sovereign rights of the Palestinian people.

Furthermore, direct, and indiscriminate attacks against civilians are prohibited by international law, and at all times necessary precautions must be taken to avoid civilian casualties. We therefore reiterate our call for compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, and for a commitment by all parties to justice and our common humanity.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms that an internationally agreed two-state solution, based on pre-1967 borders, remains the most credible path to resolving this issue. Only through dialogue and good faith negotiations, respectful of the bedrock principles of international law, can security for Israel and the State of Palestine be assured, and for Palestinian claims to dignity, equality, and human rights be honoured. The international community must deepen its commitment to take the political, diplomatic, and legal steps necessary to de-escalate tensions. The imperative is clear; we must stand together, firmly, and resolutely, and demand peace and justice for all. Now is the time!

I thank you.