



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

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Statement

by

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**United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Improving Safety and Security of
Peacekeepers**

Security Council

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Thank you Mr. President,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes today's discussion on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers, and we thank the briefers for their insightful remarks.

Peace operations remain one of the most effective tools in our collective quest for peace and security. Yet, amidst a plethora of emergent and contemporary risk factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the hazards of climate change, and the asymmetric threats posed by armed groups and terrorists, peace operations have become increasingly complex.

Peacekeeping personnel are tasked with carrying out their mandates in increasingly harsh political, security, and environmental conditions. In far too many contexts, they have paid the ultimate price in the noble pursuit of protecting others. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines pays tribute to all uniformed personnel for their commitments and sacrifices. We also condemn, in the strongest terms, all acts of violence perpetrated against peacekeepers, and encourage host states to promptly investigate and prosecute those responsible for such attacks.

Mr. President,

The immense expectations placed on all mission personnel, both uniformed and civilian, to deliver peace and security in the most volatile of circumstances, demand the full support and cooperation of the international community. Consistent political engagement amongst the Secretariat, the Security Council, Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs), and host countries is essential to ensure effective mission performance and to guarantee the safety and security of mission personnel.

So too must we ensure that peace operations are provided with adequate resources - *human, technical and financial* - as well as clear, focused, and actionable mandates. Peacekeeping personnel should also be provided with the necessary training and support at all stages of peacekeeping - *from pre-deployment to post-deployment* - accompanied by adequate incentive structures to reward high performance, and remedial mechanisms to address performance gaps. The health and well-being of peacekeepers must also be treated as a critical priority, especially during COVID-19. To this end, all peacekeepers should be provided with safe and efficacious vaccines as a means of protecting them, as well as the host-communities in which they are deployed.

Professional development opportunities, in areas such as language training and cultural enrichment, will enable peacekeepers to overcome communication barriers when deployed, and strengthen their engagement with local communities. Improving community engagement is an essential factor for keeping peacekeepers safe in the field.

The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse is one that demands urgent attention. We firmly condemn these violations and reaffirm our support to the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. Swift and impartial investigations must be conducted whenever these incidents occur. It is also crucial that Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) are consulted immediately whenever there are allegations against their deployed personnel to ensure that corrective measures are taken without delay.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the ongoing thrust to streamline peacekeeping under the Secretary-General's A4P initiative. This initiative brings collective political action to the

forefront of our efforts to maintain international peace and security, which is of paramount importance to successfully prevent and resolve conflicts, and to bolster peacekeeper safety and security.

Our delegation also commends the ongoing efforts to include more women into peace operations in all capacities, both uniformed and civilian, and at all levels, from frontline duty to senior leadership. Women are important agents and facilitators of peace in all contexts, and we strongly encourage their increased participation and engagement in all facets of peacekeeping. We take this opportunity to congratulate Kenyan peacekeeper, Ms Steplyn Nya-boga, who served as Military Gender Adviser to the recently ended African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), on receiving the 2020 UN Military Gender Adviser of the Year Award.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms our view that lasting peace and security can only be achieved through nationally-owned and socially-inclusive political solutions. Peace operations are an effective political tool that can help reconfigure the social fabric of conflict-affected states, facilitate humanitarian delivery, and lay the foundation for post-conflict peacebuilding and development. To be most effective, peacekeeping must *always* be conducted with the utmost respect for the sovereignty and political independence of host countries.

I Thank You.