



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

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Statement

By

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At the

United Nations Security Council VTC Briefing UNAMI

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Thank you, Mr President,

I would also like to thank Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasscheart for her briefing and extend our gratitude to her and her team for their continued efforts in Iraq. I also welcome our distinguish colleague, Ambassador Mohammed Hussein Bahr al-Ulum, PR of Iraq.

Mr President,

We begin by recognising the continued efforts of the Iraqi government towards the holding of free, fair and credible elections, including through the passage of the First Amendment to the Federal Supreme Court Law, which is necessary for the certification of electoral results. UNAMI's continued support to the Independent High Electoral Commission to facilitate thorough and effective preparation is crucial in this regard. The need for inclusive elections cannot be overstated. Accordingly, we welcome the Council of Minister's focus on promoting and monitoring women's participation, as well as the General Secretariat's proposed measures to prevent and address violence against women candidates. This election is an opportunity to restore unity in Iraq. In this context, we further recognise Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's call for a comprehensive national dialogue geared towards enhancing mutual understanding among Iraqi communities, and rebuilding the social fabric of Iraq.

We also take this opportunity to welcome the Yazidi Female Survivors Law that was passed by the Council of Representatives. This is a milestone; it constitutes the first legal recognition by the Government of the crimes committed by ISIL against Yazidis, Turkmens, Christians and Shabaks, as war crimes. The assistance and reparations to be provided under this legislation, as well as the exclusion of future amnesty for perpetrators of the listed crimes is a significant step that must be lauded. Efforts towards further justice must continue.

Amidst the efforts to prepare for elections, the Government has had to divert attention to addressing the rise in COVID-19 cases. The COVID-19 vaccines that were delivered to Iraq through the COVAX programme, and donated from COVAX partners, are crucial in the fight against COVID-19. Further, we welcome the efforts of UNDP in the rehabilitation of health-care facilities, as well as the WHO for its continued work with the Ministry of Health to ensure that COVID-19 risk-mitigation measures are in place. This progress is indeed positive; however, we appeal to the international community, to increase efforts to enhance the Government's capacity to address the pandemic and its related economic and humanitarian challenges. We also call on Member States to support the 2021 Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan.

We cannot talk about the humanitarian situation without recognising the severe impact of climate change on Iraq, one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. Record-breaking heat threatens the health of Iraqis year after year, creates droughts and decimates agriculture and has turned water limitations into a water crisis. Both the impact of years of conflict on the environment and a new kind of warfare – disregard of major emitters far away, have turned this ancient land filled with history into a modern epicentre of the climate crisis. We welcome all efforts to address the climate emergency and vulnerabilities and call on those most responsible for it, to take urgent action accordingly. We call for sustained support for the implementation of measures to build resilience to climate change and address issues such as water scarcity, as underlying risk factors such as these cannot be de-linked from the response to combat the challenges in the security landscape.

Mr. President,

The identification and return of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and property provides a level of closure to the victims' families. We welcome further progress made towards identifying missing persons and property during the reporting period. The constructive collaboration between the Republic of Iraq and the State of Kuwait is essential to advance this humanitarian file. We recognise UNAMI's diligent efforts,

as well as the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross in supporting and facilitating progress.

We affirm our support to SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert and to UNAMI, and stand in solidarity with the Iraqi people.

Thank you.