



**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>

Remarks

by

H.E. Inga Rhonda King

Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations

***ARRIA FORMULA – “ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF THE DEPARTURE OF
FOREIGN FIGHTERS AND MERCENARIES FROM LIBYA ON THE SAHEL REGION”***

United Nations Security Council

06/18/2021
New York

Please check against delivery

Thank you Chair,

1. I begin by extending my appreciation to the cosponsors and the briefers for their presentations and welcome all Member States participating in this meeting.
2. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has long been drawing attention to the ramifications of the unmanaged movement of foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya to neighbouring countries, the Sahel region and the wider continent of Africa.
3. The Sahel region with its porous borders has a front-row seat to the challenges that the unregulated movements of these groups can cause. The unfortunate event in Chad last April that resulted in the untimely and tragic passing of President Idriss Déby, attests to such.
4. Our deliberation today occurs against the backdrop of significant positive developments in Libya, especially on the UN multitrack process. We commend the GNU for its ongoing effort to ensure peace and stability are fully restored in Libya.
5. Having said that, the need to address lingering security challenges in Libya, whilst preventing concomitant security difficulties for the region, cannot be overstated. The full compliance with the Security Council's arms embargo and the October 23rd, 2020 Ceasefire Agreement, as well as ensuring enhanced regional security cooperation, are paramount.
6. And whilst efforts are afoot to ensure the swift withdrawal of the estimated 20,000 remaining foreign fighters and mercenaries through the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned ceasefire monitoring mechanism (LCMM) in accordance with **S/Res/2570**; the question now arises regarding the response to these challenges in the Sahel region. In this respect, we hope that our deliberations will be productive in identifying possible solutions.
7. We also wish to make the following observations:

8. Having undergone military and combat training, foreign fighters and mercenaries have an extremely high propensity to radicalize others and destabilize regions. To this end, we can ill-afford for the Sahel region, already being plagued by Armed Terrorist Groups, to further descend into turmoil.
9. Given this dynamic, proper deradicalization programs are necessary across the region. Such programs will prevent recidivism. It is therefore incumbent that Libya and Sahel countries enhance coordination, cooperation and improve the efficiency of information sharing to combat security threats, in the region, but also to contribute to favourable conditions for peace, security, democracy and development.
10. Working with the international community, as well as regional and subregional organizations, to craft more social inclusive strategies to address radicalization leading to violent extremism is vital. The UN, AU, EU, the league of Arab Nations, inter alia, can be instrumental in this regard.
11. A focused, integrated and resolute region-wide, people-centered plan for Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR), aimed at assisting countries of origin of returned fighters and mercenaries, along with addressing the influx of illegal weapons is integral.
12. We believe that best practices and lessons drawn from internationally led DDR programs in several post-conflict countries can be instrumental.
13. Mindful of the existing socio-economic development, humanitarian and security challenges in the Sahel, a robust DDR program ought to be developed, understanding the push and pull factors that mobilized fighters to leave and return to their country of origin.
14. The AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform, as well as the Silencing the Guns initiative and the AU's Agenda 2063 could serve as basis for developing a proper program.

15. We are aware that the G5 Sahel States have and continue to devote significant resources to address security issues, especially the fight against terrorism. Notwithstanding, the development and success of any region-wide DDR program will require the provision of predictable and sustainable financial support of the international community.

16. We therefore look forward to the holding of elections in Libya on December 24, as well as greater support in responding to the complex challenges in the Sahel. These, we believe, are fundamental to creating the ideal conditions to advance effective programs and strategies in responding to the challenges facing the region.

17. I thank you.