



**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: the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the international efforts  
to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism**

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Thank you Chair

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks Tunisia for convening today's meeting. I also thank the briefers for their insightful presentations. We are pleased to co-sponsor this important event.

Terrorism and violent extremism are among the most serious and complex threats to international peace and security. In several regions of the world, the socio-economic consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have derailed peacebuilding and development actions, crucial to preventing and countering terrorism. Our efforts to combat this scourge should be grounded in a strong and concerted multilateralism, guided by all four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

The 5 June attacks in Burkina Faso that killed over 100 civilians underscore the grim reality of violent extremism. Terrorist groups and other non-state actors are emboldened by the conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Bank estimates that the pandemic has pushed an estimated 88 million people into extreme poverty. Such acute socio-economic decline, coupled with pandemic mitigation measures, have created a context in which violent extremist groups are repositioning themselves as service providers and as sources of economic opportunities for those made most vulnerable in conflict settings. Terrorist groups have found success in undermining trust in governments and other institutions through misinformation and other dangerous propaganda campaigns. For example, last year, ISIS was able to take advantage of the pandemic to relaunch attacks in Syria.

I wish to turn to the connection between climate change and increased terrorist activities. In the Lake Chad Basin, for example, climate change has been linked to drought, irregular rainfall, declining water levels, food insecurity and several other harmful repercussions. Rapidly diminishing resources has led to a surge in organized crime and gender-based violence, and we have also witnessed the increased threat of Boko Haram.

Cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, to ensure enhanced national and regional counter terrorism strategies, remains critical. In this regard, we support continued engagement between the Counter Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate (CTED), and regional organizations. These efforts will ensure necessary capacity building of security forces and local authorities, improved efforts to prevent and counter online recruitment by terrorist organizations, and increased protection of critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks. The participation and leadership of women, youth and persons with disabilities, in creating and enacting counterterrorism measures, must also be prioritised.

Confronting terrorism and violent extremism demands solutions focused on root causes of insecurity and underdevelopment. In this regard, vaccine equity, through increased support for the COVAX facility, and debt relief for low- and middle-income countries, are critical. We call on the international community to accelerate these and other actions to promote global health and economic justice, as we build back more enduringly for all humanity's sake, and in line with the SDGs. It is only in applying a holistic approach, which targets the root causes of insecurity and underdevelopment, will we make fundamental progress in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

I thank you.