



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

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**Statement**

by

**H.E. Inga Rhonda King**

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

At the

**The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question**

United Nations Security Council

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New York

Thank you, Mr President, and I thank all our briefers for their presentations. I also welcome our colleagues, the Representatives of Israel and the State of Palestine.

Ms. Lynn Hastings, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Ms. Yudith Oppenheimer, Ir Amim's Executive Director for the human rights perspective that she shared with us.

Mr President, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continues to stand in solidarity with the State of Palestine in their quest to live within safe and secure borders. As the occupying power, Israel has an obligation to restore normal civilian life for all Palestinians and to realize the human rights of residents of the occupied territory. It is unfortunate that within recent months, tensions within the State of Palestine have been stoked from outside, thus undermining the country and the aspirations of its people. Our goal should be to forge a secure and durable peace between Israelis and Palestinians and consolidate efforts to preserve a sustainable two-State solution without departing from relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. In this vein, we call for the activation of the Middle East Quartet to restart peace talks and negotiations as an urgent priority.

On the issue of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the fundamental point about settlements is that they are illegal. International law is clear on this point. Let us be reminded that in 2004, the International Court of Justice unanimously found that Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory breached Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We must all act as responsible members of the international community and condemn these breaches of international law.

The impact of the Israeli illegal occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues to highlight the daily Palestinian struggle. Saint Vincent and

the Grenadines remains concerned about Israel's policy of demolishing Palestinian homes and property in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Equally, we unequivocally condemn the most recent demolition by Israeli occupation forces (IOF) in the Palestinian Bedouin community of Humsa al-Baqai'a, in the northern Jordan Valley of the occupied West Bank. There is absolutely no justification for these actions. The international community must take effective and timely diplomatic action to end this policy.

Turning to the situation in the besieged Gaza Strip, we are concerned about the worsening humanitarian crisis, which has been further compounded by the 11-day war in Gaza with further attacks kept at bay by a fragile ceasefire. The rebuilding of Gaza must begin in earnest. We welcome the small steps taken in this regard but much more must be done. The U.N. estimates that millions of Palestinian people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. We once again call on the international community to provide additional funding to support UNRWA Programme Budget, we were again reminded earlier today of the 100M dollar shortfall and imminent cash flow crisis. Additionally, it is evident that Israel's illegal 15-year blockade has devastated the economy in Gaza. In this connection, we reiterate our call on Israel to fully lift the blockade on Gaza and facilitate greater supply of humanitarian assistance to the area.

In closing, we echo the plea of Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, to the international community to adopt a plan of action, which includes calling upon Israel to fully dismantle its illegal settlements and ensuring full accountability of Israeli leaders who are *responsible for grave breaches of international law* in the occupied Palestinian territory. Furthermore, we welcome the decision by the U.N. Human Rights Council to form an independent international commission to investigate

Israeli violations of Palestinian rights. For such a time as this, let us redouble efforts and focus on increasing the protection of the rights of the population in the occupied territory. Minister Riyad Mansour underscored earlier today that this generation of Palestinians believe that there is no alternative to their freedom. This is a legitimate aspiration and we are duty bound to ensure that it is realised.

I thank you.