



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

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Statement

by

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

At the

**Arria-Formula Meeting on:
“Humanitarian Action: Overcoming challenges in situations of armed conflict
and counter-terrorism operations”**

United Nations Security Council

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New York

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

I commend the Republic of Kenya for convening this important meeting and I thank the briefers for their insightful remarks.

Terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, undermines international peace and security and threatens stability and prosperity *everywhere*. In light of this pervasive threat, the international community must work diligently and collectively to address the health, economic, social, security, political, and environmental drivers of armed conflict and attend to the humanitarian crises they precipitate. These root and proximate causes of insecurity, which include the hazards of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and legacies of underdevelopment - particularly in fragile settings - create fertile breeding grounds for radicalisation, terrorism and armed group activity. Without enhanced cooperation at the national, regional, and global levels, our capacity for responding to these threats would be gravely diminished.

In far too many situations of armed conflict, counterterrorism efforts have negatively impacted civilian populations, non-combatants, medical personnel, and other persons and objects - such as health and educational facilities - that International Humanitarian Law (IHL) seeks to protect. We can and we must do better to preserve this humanitarian space and to protect vulnerable communities including refugees, internally displaced persons, and those made stateless as a result of hostile forces over which they exert little or no influence.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expresses deep concern about the impact of counterterrorism activity on humanitarian action. We call on all parties to armed conflict, including those engaged in counterterrorism efforts, to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the responsibilities imposed by the Geneva Conventions which demand that all wounded and sick persons are collected and cared for irrespective of whether those persons previously engaged in hostilities. We also recall the guiding humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and encourage all states to adapt their counterterrorism policies to comply with these humanitarian standards. Greater attention must therefore be given to the humanitarian imperative, as outlined in Pillar IV of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS), and mandated by relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2462.

To conclude, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms that lasting peace and security can only be achieved through nationally-owned and inclusive political solutions. While we strive to eliminate the scourge of terrorism, we must remain ever respectful of the of the principles of international law - in particular the sovereignty authority of states.

I thank you