



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

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**Statement**

By

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At the

**Arria-Formula meeting on  
“Addressing and Countering Hate Speech and Preventing Incitement to Discrimination,  
Hostility and Violence on Social Media”**

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Thank you Ambassador Kimani and to the briefers for their informative remarks.

Societies continue to debate the limits on the right of free speech, which is clearly not an absolute right. The limitations on freedom of speech are weighed with the public interest and safety in mind and a balance struck. Social media, with its wide reach, has made this balancing act all the more critical and, indeed, more difficult.

Giants in global communications, enveloped in mega profits and profiteering, own and control the various internet platforms, with little or no public regulation. With this great power, comes a correspondingly great responsibility that has too often been ignored or abandoned. I take note of some commitments made by the social media briefers with us today during this critical period of maturation. To the extent that hateful words and incitement have an impact on international peace and security, it is a matter that the Security Council must consider, within its mandate. So, I would like to thank Kenya for raising this timely discussion.

We know that genocide and crimes against humanity have been preceded by incitement through the media and causal connections have been established in many cases. “Direct and public incitement to commit genocide” is a crime under the 1948 Genocide Convention and while this provision has not, so far, been invoked in relation to social media platforms and users, the framework is there.

We should consider the following three points:

The international community must remain vigilant to hate speech as well as the various methods used by its perpetrators. Tackling hate speech will require multi-sectoral involvement and cooperation at local, regional and international levels.

Let us remember that social media is a reflection of the views of elements of society. For instance, where there are with deep pockets of misogyny, they will spew anti-woman rhetoric on social media platforms. A global community that has not dismantled racist ideas will see hateful racist rhetoric which often incites violence. We have to address the root, and proximate, causes so that hate speech is less likely to be posted in the first place. We should consider situations on our

agenda where these drivers of conflict and of hate speech converge, and undertake relevant measures through Council products to address or mitigate their impact.

When designing sanctions regimes and when listing individuals and entities under these regimes, the Council should remain conscious of activity on social media that fuels violence or undermines the peace and stability of the affected country.

In closing, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, and we recognize the important role of the Security Council and its members in supporting implementation of the strategy.