



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

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Statement

By

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At the

United Nations Security Council Briefing on UNAMI

November 23, 2021
New York
United Nations Security Council

Thank you, Mr. President.

At the outset, we would like to extend our appreciation to SRSG Jeanine-Hennis Plasschaert for her comprehensive remarks this morning, as well as her team's continued support to the people of Iraq, particularly during the recent electoral period. We also welcome Ms. Amal Kabashi, whose work towards safeguarding women's rights and strengthening gender equality must not only be commended, but also supported. In this vein, we thank Mexico, as President of the Security Council, for its commitment to including women civil society briefers in Council discussions, and creating the space for this important exchange with Ms. Kabashi.

Despite the myriad of complex challenges that exist in Iraq, it is encouraging to witness the Iraqi people's commitment to the national peace and security agenda, and the democratic and inclusive framework within which this could be achieved. The milestone parliamentary elections that were held on 10 October, in advance of the constitutional deadline, exemplified the commitment of the Government and the Independent High Electoral Commission to the political, economic, social and democratic progress of Iraq. In this regard, we recognise UNAMI's critical role that began well in advance of the holding of elections. In addition to UNAMI's provision of technical electoral assistance and advice, and the provision of a strengthened, robust and visible UN team, in accordance with its mandate, UNAMI's sustained efforts to build trust and keep voters informed of the electoral process, including through public outreach campaigns, are indeed commendable. The slogan "Your country. Your future. Your vote" is one that we wholeheartedly support, as it advocated a people-centred approach to a process inherently inclusive of all voices, including women and minorities.

Mr. President,

The holding of elections was a much-welcomed step in the right direction; however, it was also the start of a long road to recovery, which must begin with the peaceful formation of a new government. We are hopeful that the newly formed and inclusive government will prioritize the creation of a space for dialogue with the Iraqi people, so that their needs and aspirations can be met. Emphasis should be placed on those most vulnerable and marginalized, so that they may meaningfully participate in discussions about their future and the direction of their country. Regional and international stakeholders and partners of Iraq must also contribute to a constructive post-electoral environment. The right political will and momentum could open the door to effective governance and much needed reforms. In this regard, we underscore the need for all actors within Iraq to contribute to this atmosphere of peace that facilitates a stable, secure and prosperous future for Iraq. We strongly condemn the attempted assassination against the Prime Minister, as well as the ongoing threats against UNAMI and others, which threaten to erode the political progress that has thus far been made. We also express our concern over the continued attacks carried out by Da'esh, which undermine all ongoing efforts towards peace and security.

We welcome that, amidst the preparations for elections, the government continued its efforts towards national priorities, such as the strengthening of regional and international relations, an approach that is indispensable to successfully tackling challenges, including those that are common to the region. The COVID-19 pandemic remains an issue with far-reaching consequences, and we welcome the joint efforts, including by the WHO & UNICEF, to support the Government of Iraq in its rollout of vaccines. We take note of the pandemic's impacts on efforts to advance the issue

of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property; yet, we remain encouraged by the commitment of UNAMI, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Government of Iraq, to make progress and ultimately resolve on this important file.

To conclude, we reiterate our unwavering support for the work of UNAMI, and all efforts towards achieving peace, security and prosperity in Iraq, in line with its sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. Thank you.