

March 4th 2022

SVG'S POSITION ON THE ONGOING CONFLICT BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Statement to the UN General Assembly on the situation in Ukraine by H.E, I. Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

Mr. President,

At the outset, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the victims who have lost their lives due to the “special military operation” launched by the Russian Federation in the independent territory of Ukraine.

We continue to monitor the escalation of the conflict and are deeply troubled by the deteriorating situation. From our perspective, the “special military operation” is neither necessary nor desirable and is an affront to the United Nations Charter.

Given the historical context of the geopolitical situation in the region and Russia’s articulation of its legitimate security concerns and perspective on the political situation in the Donbass region, we acknowledge the need for constructive diplomatic efforts that thoroughly address these concerns.

The “special military operation”, however, cannot reasonably be justified. It only endangers international peace and security and will exacerbate human suffering across the globe.

Let us be clear, no member state of our organization will be immune from the ripple effect of this armed conflict.

Mr. President,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is unwaveringly committed to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, including those relating to Article 2 subsection (4), which prohibit the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of states and the right to self-determination. Our existence as a sovereign and independent, small nation state is owed to these international, sacrosanct norms and non-negotiable, timeless principles.

Accordingly, we cannot stand askance while the bedrock principles of international law are being jettisoned and call for the immediate cessation of all hostilities — we specifically urge the strict adherence to the principles of sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, non-intervention, non-interference, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

Equally, we reiterate the recent calls made by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) for the pacific settlement of disputes and the respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr President,

Historically, the Russian Federation has been a defender of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, inclusive of the sacred principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes. This is emblematic of its membership in the “Group of Friends in Defense of the United Nations Charter”. As a fellow defender of these principles and member of this Group, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines unequivocally insists that the Russian Federation cease its military operations and immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine.

On countless occasions, we have witnessed the insidious effects of interventionism and external aggressions across the developing world and we know that constructive dialogue, in adherence to international law, is the only path to peace and progress, however difficult that path may be.

We deeply regret that the Minsk Agreements have been violated. We also make an appeal for meaningful diplomatic initiatives and encourage the furtherance of the work of the Normandy Format, the Trilateral Contact Group and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We urge the parties to exhaust all diplomatic efforts to find a peaceful solution to the current conflict.

We firmly believe that the nobility of peace is far preferable than an ignoble military adventure. History has taught us that peace is a great cause and great causes have never been won by doubtful men or women. While we are encouraged by the recent meeting that was held on the Belarusian border between both sides, we must put on record that the use of nuclear weapons is inconceivable and wholly unacceptable— we counsel against the mere suggestion by anyone. We counsel further that space for continued dialogue must remain open.

Before I conclude, it will be remiss of me not to express my dismay for the disturbing reports that people of African descent are being singled out to unfair treatment as they join the masses fleeing the Ukrainian territory. In line with international humanitarian law and its guiding principles, we call on all states to uphold their international obligations and ensure the safety of all peoples.

Mr. President,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a stout champion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and their primacy in our multilateral system. We ***must***, and I repeat, ***we must*** give peace a ***real*** chance to succeed. We must stop this war and return to diplomacy.

Thank you and Peace profound!