

# SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

**GRULAC-Endorsed Candidate**

United Nations Security Council

2020 - 2021



**Principled Pragmatism and Partnership**

**One of the essential contributions to be made by small states like ours is the tireless advocacy for timeless principles enshrined in international law. With no ideological or geostrategic axes to grind, we consider it our solemn obligation to not only articulate these principles, but to ensure that they are applied consistently and upheld in the international community as universal truths, rather than selective, uneven and unpredictable tools to further hegemonic or great power ambition.**



*Friends of all; We strive for a better World*

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## *Who We Are*

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### **Defining epochs in Our History - Colonial Conquest and Settlement, native genocide and slavery, indentureship and empire, anti-colonial struggle and Independence, climate and neoliberalism**

Our quest to build a modern, independent, democratic, post-colonial economy and society that is at once national, regional, and global, has been shaped by our small size, our islandness, our geographic location, our history, our demography, and the contemporary challenges arising from climate change and neoliberalism.

European contact with St. Vincent and the Grenadines first occurred in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the indigenous Kallinago people welcomed enslaved Africans from Nigeria, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, who were shipwrecked off St. Vincent on route to Barbados. The two peoples slowly became one: the Garifuna. As time passed, and as word spread, runaway enslaved Africans from other islands made the perilous journey to St. Vincent to join the free Garifuna community.

In 1763, Britain assumed suzerainty of St. Vincent and the Grenadines through the Treaty of Paris under which there was a general carve-up of territories in the Eastern Caribbean between the British and the French. Thereafter, for over 200 years continuously, save and except for a few years of French occupation (1779 – 1783), St. Vincent and the Grenadines remained under British colonial rule until internal self-government in 1969 and constitutional independence in 1979.

Swiftly in 1764, the British established organised African slavery and a sugar economy; over 55,000 enslaved Africans disembarked in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In 1764, too, the colonialists declared that all the land belonged to the British Crown. There then ensued a prolonged guerilla war for over 30 years, interspersed by tenuous treaties or agreements, in which the Kallinago and Garifuna people fought against the British for their lands and the right of self-determination. In 1795, the British ambushed and killed the Garifuna leader, Paramount Chief Joseph Chatoyer; in the process the Garifuna resistance was crushed.

The British then carried out a campaign of genocide against the Garifuna people. Following this, over 5,000 Garifuna sons and daughters were shipped to an inhospitable rocky island off the coast of St. Vincent — approximately one-half of them died within six months; the rest were exiled to Roatan Island in the Bay of Honduras. From this sturdy and heroic people, descendants are found in Garifuna communities in Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and a few cities in the United States of America. These descendants see St. Vincent and the Grenadines, their original Yuremein, as their spiritual homeland, many of whom pay organised visits annually to their fellow-Garifuna in their motherland. In 2001, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared the Garifuna language, dance and music to be “Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity”.

Resistance to slavery hastened its demise in 1838. The organised enslavement of Africans in St. Vincent and the Grenadines existed for some 75 years, a much shorter period than in most other countries of the “New World”. Between 1845 and 1881, indentured labourers were recruited to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, first from Madeira, and then from India, to work on the plantations in the post-slavery period, alongside the former slaves and their descendants.

From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines ramped up their struggle against colonialism and for self-determination. Through the fever of history, our people have built a harmonious society with a core of tried and tested values of our Caribbean civilisation. Indeed, our nation’s component of this civilisation constitutes a veritable symphony of wholeness, with occasional dissonance: We are the songs of the indigenous people (Kallinago and Gariguna); we are the rhythm of Africa; we are the melody of Europe; we are the chords of Asia; and we are the home-grown lyrics of the Caribbean.

Today, St. Vincent and the Grenadines possesses strengths and possibilities, weaknesses and limitations. We do not drink at the fountain of learned helplessness. Through a combination of faith and reason, hard and smart work, a progressive embrace of multilateralism and internationalist solidarity, and the joinder of justice, peace, and democracy, we have been building a society worthy of our illustrious forebears. We are friends of all and enemies of none. We are a middle-income, small island developing state ready to play an even greater role in the upliftment of our nation, region, our hemisphere, and all humanity.

## ***A Word on Non-Intervention & Non-Interference***

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**Hon. Dr. Ralph E. Gonsalves**

*Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*

*“The principles of non-intervention and non-interference are of particular importance to Small Island Developing States. Lacking military might or economic wealth, and constrained within narrow borders, we owe our existence as nation states to a global recognition and respect for the principle that no other nation - large or small, rich or poor, near or far - should be allowed to interfere in our sovereign affairs or intervene in matters properly resident in our domestic jurisdiction. Without strict adherence to those tenets, small states' existence dangles precariously on the threads of great power intrigue or changing perceptions of our strategic significance.*

*Without these principles, our international order reverts to a barbarism in which the strong are doing what they can and the weak merely suffering what they must. This is unacceptable. Because of our undeniable reliance on this cornerstone of international law, Small States are among its staunchest defenders. Every violation of the principle of non-intervention – wherever it may occur - is an indirect assault on our own survival.”*

## ***Candidature to the United Nations Security Council***

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Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is the GRULAC-endorsed candidate for the Security Council for the term 2020 - 2021.

We are grounded in our respect for sovereignty, diversity of views, dialogue and peace and development.

We are committed to the bedrock foundations of the UN Charter, namely: sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention in domestic affairs, and collective cooperation in solving global problems.

We believe that solidarity, consensus-building, integration and multilateral cooperation are key to solving the world's problems.

We are a people who have confronted all past and current challenges - from invading armies to encroaching seas - with an indomitable spirit of verve and optimism. We approach our multilateral engagements with a similar spirit.



## ***Engagement at the United Nations***

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Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has actively engaged in, and led processes to reform and strengthen the United Nations:

We have contributed to the United Nations' work for over thirty years. Over the years, we have taken up several leading roles including in the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, the reform of the Security Council and the alignment of the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has been active in the General Assembly, recently chairing the 5th Committee, and our Permanent Representative is currently the 74th President of the Economic and Social Council.

## ***International Agenda For Corrective Action***

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- Tackling terrorism
- Stemming the spread of weapons of mass destruction
- Dealing seriously with human trafficking
- Taking a stand against illegal drugs and small arms
- Treating appropriately with refugees
- Doing all it takes to stop violence against women and children
- Tackling scarcity of food and water and other humanitarian concerns
- Continuing our war against diseases
- Addressing Climate Change comprehensively
- Righting historical wrongs through our decolonization efforts and our quest for reparatory justice for native genocide and African slavery
- Working towards improving the working methods of the UNSC to make it a more legitimate, representative and effective body

*Small size is no impediment to impactful  
contributions on the world stage...*

**Leadership roles in the UN's post-Financial Crisis response; in revitalization of the General Assembly; in Security Council Reform; in advancing the Law of the Sea; in Small Arms control; in ambitious measures to combat Climate Change; in the global response to Non-Communicable Diseases, in the Administrative and Budgetary Affairs of the United Nations and in the implementation of Sustainable Development.**

## *Unique Perspective of a Small Island Developing State*

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The perspectives of small states - inclusive of Small Island Developing States - have been historically the least heard in the Security Council. As the threats to international peace and security have evolved in diverse ways, so too, has the need for a diversity of viewpoints on the Security Council increased.

Small Island States have largely solved - and solved spectacularly - the challenge of forging peaceful, harmonious societies amidst many of the social, ethnic, political, historical and cultural fissures that traditionally lie at the root of many breaches of international peace and security.

We have confronted these challenges not with a surfeit of weapons or dollars, but with mutual respect, dialogue, and an understanding that unique situations require not static ideological solutions, but flexibility and innovation geared towards the specificities of the issue at hand.

We hope to bring this principled pragmatism to bear in the Security Council.

## *Climate and Security*

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The climate threat is unprecedented, urgent and unique. As a small island developing state, we know first-hand the effects of climate change and natural disasters. Its effects make it an existential matter of the highest order; it goes to the very existence of our country.

On the Council, we will be a voice for SIDS, and for all, on the issue of climate and security.

**“The rise of climate change as the existential threat of our era has not replaced the persistent peril of armed conflict across the globe. The human suffering in Syria, Yemen and Myanmar demands greater international attention and action. Similarly, the potential threats to international peace and security posed by tensions on the Korean peninsula, among the Gulf States and in the State of Palestine require persistent and prioritised diplomacy. And the historical injustices done to Africa must be made right as we navigate the myriad and complex peace and security issues on the continent. But we must be careful not to present a false choice between these issues. We have to deal with them all, no matter how inconvenient climate-related security may be.” –**

*Saint Vincent and the Grenadines at the Open Debate in the Security Council entitled “Addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security”*

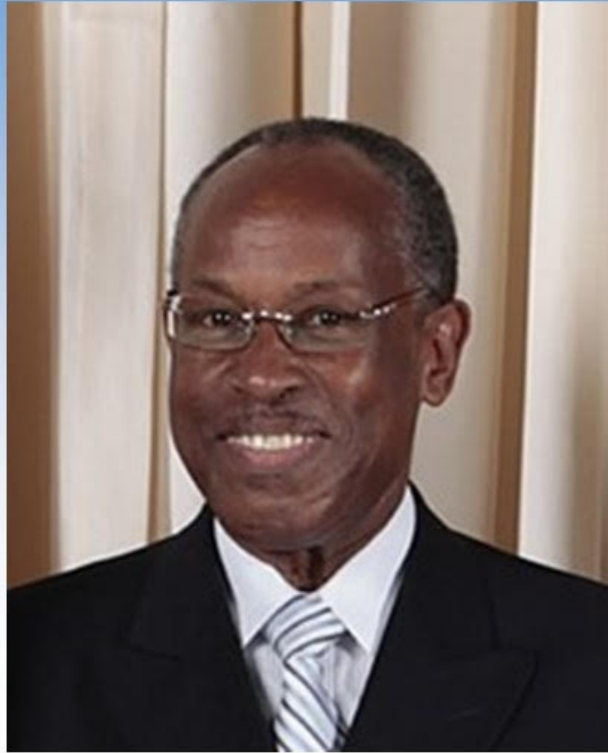
*25 January 2019*

## ***Our Commitment to Development***

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Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has embraced the Sustainable Development Goals and aligned our national planning with the SDGs. Our achievements to date include: zero hunger, universal access to education, improved healthcare, a marked reduction in poverty, and ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation measures, to name a few.

Developmental constraints and conflict do not occur in siloes. As such, we hope to bring our experiences, lessons learned, and our acute awareness of development needs to bear in the deliberations of the Security Council.



*“The link between development and peace is well-established; and the link between peace and the United Nations is immutable.”*

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**Hon. Sir. Louis Straker**

*Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs of  
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*



## ***Words on Multilateralism***

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*"Any attempt to deviate from the Charter - in word, deed or spirit - would constitute an assault on sovereignty, a departure from diplomacy and the improvisation of international law on the fly. Loss of sovereignty has never benefitted the weak or powerless.*

*(General Debate of the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly)*

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### **Hon. Camillo M. Gonsalves**

*Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines  
[Former Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations]*



*"It is troubling that multilateralism is so frequently being questioned today. Many are asking whether this agreement [the 2030 Agenda] would be at all possible in today's political reality. But, are we asking the right question? Perhaps the answer to our fears and concerns lie in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda..."*

***"I am optimistic that we can bring more coherence across the three main pillars of the UN"***

*(Security Council Open Debate on Multilateralism and Strengthening the Role of the United Nations 9 November, 2018)*

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**H.E. I. Rhonda King**

*Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the Nations & 74th President of the Economic and Social Council  
(2018 - 2019)*

## *Did You Know?*

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- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines passed one of the first pieces of environmental legislation, the King's Hill Forest Act of 1791, based on the concept that deforestation might cause a decline in rainfall.
- The Carib Treaty of 1772 was one of the first in history between the mighty British Empire and an Indigenous people in the Western Hemisphere.
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is home to one of the oldest horticultural centers and the oldest botanical garden in the Western Hemisphere.
- Yuremein is the original Kallinago name for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; later it was called Hairouna, Home of the Blessed.
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines comprises 32 islands.
- The capital, Kingstown, is known as the city of arches, with hundreds of arches throughout the city.

# SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

KALIMBA





The Amazona Guildingui  
National Bird of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines