

Joint Statement on the Escalation of Tensions Between Pakistan and de facto authorities in Afghanistan

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We are deeply concerned by the rapidly unfolding situation between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the de facto authorities in Afghanistan. The escalation of cross-border hostilities in recent weeks has placed civilian lives, regional stability, and long-standing economic ties under grave threat.

Over the past weeks, exchanges of military strikes and confrontations have intensified along the shared border, including air operations and ground clashes that both Islamabad and Kabul have described as significant escalations of a conflict that has simmered for years. Pakistan's defence authorities have described the situation as a state of "[open war](#)", citing repeated cross-border attacks and pledging further operations, and de facto authorities have openly condemned strikes on its cities and border provinces as breaches of sovereignty.

Amid this violent escalation, the humanitarian toll has already mounted. UNAMA has documented [146 civilian casualties](#) including the confirmed death of children and women.

Afghanistan has endured nearly five decades of war, displacement, forced returns, and recurrent cycles of violence, leaving millions of families vulnerable and economically fragile. The intensifying confrontation threatens to worsen conditions for communities on both sides of the border, including refugee families, internally displaced persons, traders, and labourers whose livelihoods depend on peaceful cross-border economic activity. Restriction of movement and closure of border crossings already undermine trade, access to goods and services, and traditional economic livelihood patterns that have historically supported border-region families.

As Iran, Afghanistan's western neighbour, remains embroiled in conflict, the growing number of people living in poverty is likely to face worsening livelihood scarcity and rising inflation, largely due to the disruption of regional trade. We therefore urge the de facto authorities to immediately ensure secure trade routes, including with Pakistan, to help alleviate the economic hardship faced by the population amid heightened regional tensions, which have left millions of civilians struggling to access food and sustainable livelihoods.

We emphasise the following principles:

- 1. The overarching priority must be the protection of civilians:** All parties have obligations under international humanitarian law to avoid harm to non-combatants. The loss of innocent life is unacceptable, and every possible measure should be taken to prevent further civilian casualties.
- 2. An immediate ceasefire is essential:** The current cycle of reprisals and military escalation cannot produce security or justice. Both conflicting parties must urgently halt offensive operations and agree to a genuine cessation of hostilities.
- 3. Sustainable peace requires inclusive dialogue:** Military responses cannot substitute for political processes. Continued engagement by trusted third-party mediators is necessary to build confidence, address underlying grievances, and secure agreements that enable long-term peace and stability.

4. **Economic cooperation and social welfare are critical to reducing instability:** The human and economic cost of conflict falls disproportionately on vulnerable communities whose lives are disrupted by violence, job loss, and limits on mobility. Efforts to restore safe trade and livelihoods must be part of any comprehensive peace plan.

We call on all parties to commit to these principles without delay. History demonstrates that prolonged conflict harms generations, undermines fundamental human rights, and deepens mistrust between peoples whose futures are intertwined.

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