

Pakistan military says India 'playing with fire'

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Pakistan's military has called on the international community to restrain India from renewed hostilities, warning that further attacks would prompt Islamabad to "hit even harder" after they exchanged fire this month.

"Pakistan and India are two nuclear powers. If the Indians want to have a military conflict, they are playing with fire," Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, a spokesperson for the armed forces, told the Financial Times.

"We will hit even harder if they try to violate the ceasefire."

Chaudhry's warning will raise concerns after the brief but fierce cross-border conflict this month. Both countries launched missile and drone attacks deep into each other's territories, killing civilians on both sides and bringing the nuclear rivals to the brink of war.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi boasted days after US President Donald Trump announced a ceasefire on May 10 that strikes against military

targets deep inside Pakistan represented a "new normal" in which India would retaliate over terror attacks not only against the perpetrators but also their sponsors.

"The international community should tell them that this is not the way nation states behave," Chaudhry said.

Watchful: an Indian soldier on guard at the Line of Control between Pakistan and India in Jammu region on Tuesday



New Delhi launched the first barrage in response to a terror attack that killed 26 people in April in India-administered Kashmir, which it alleges Islamabad was behind.

Chaudhry denied Pakistan had any involvement in terrorism and said New Delhi had launched its attack "under false pretences". He hailed Trump as a "statesman", saying the US played an "important role" in ending hostilities.

Pakistan's military, he added, welcomed Trump's offer to mediate talks over Kashmir, which both countries claim and control parts of, but said a "comprehensive dialogue" should include cross-border terrorism and extrajudicial assassinations.

New Delhi has denied Washington played a role in brokering the ceasefire, which it said was agreed bilaterally, and has insisted talks over Kashmir should not include external parties. Pakistan also accuses India of backing militant violence in its volatile western provinces, as well as pursuing what Chaudhry called "transnational killings".

A bombing on a school bus in Balochistan province yesterday killed at least three children. Pakistan's military blamed the attack on "Indian terror proxies" without providing evidence.

India rejected the "baseless allegations", accusing Pakistan of seeking to "divert attention from its reputation as the global epicentre of terrorism".

Additional reporting by Andres Schipani in New Delhi