

India missile attack kills 8 in Pakistani-controlled territory

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ISLAMABAD — India fired missiles into Pakistani-controlled territory in several locations early Wednesday, killing at least eight people including a child, Pakistani authorities said. India said it was striking infrastructure used by militants.

Tensions have soared between the nuclear-armed neighbors since last month's massacre of tourists in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir. India has blamed Pakistan for backing the militant attack, which Islamabad has denied.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned Wednesday's air-strikes and said the "deceitful enemy has carried out cowardly attacks at five locations in Pakistan" and that his country would retaliate.

"Pakistan has every right to give a robust response to this act of war imposed by India, and a strong response is indeed being given," Sharif said.

He said his country and its armed forces "know very well how to deal with the enemy."

Sharif has convened a meeting of the National Security Committee for Wednesday morning.

The missiles struck locations in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and in the country's eastern Punjab province. One hit a mosque in the city of Bahawalpur in Punjab, where a child was killed and a woman and man were injured.

Pakistan's military spokesperson, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif, said that India launched attacks at six different locations, resulting in the martyrdom of eight people and injuries to 38 others.

State-run Pakistan Television, quoting security officials, said the country's air force shot down three Indian jets in retaliation but provided no additional detail. There was no immediate comment from India about Pakistan's claim.

Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Ministry said Indian forces had launched the strikes while staying in Indian airspace. Other locations hit were near Muridke in Punjab and Kotli in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir.

It said the attack reportedly resulted in civilian casualties and posed a significant threat to commercial air traffic. "This reckless escalation has brought



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Local residents examine a building damaged from a suspected Indian missile attack near Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan controlled Kashmir, on Wednesday.

the two nuclear-armed states closer to a major conflict," the statement said.

India's Defense Ministry said at least nine sites were targeted "where terrorist attacks against India have been planned."

"Our actions have been focused, measured and non-escalatory in nature. No Pakistan military facilities have been targeted," the statement said, adding that "India has demonstrated considerable restraint in selection of targets and method of execution."

"We are living up to the commitment that those responsible for this attack will be held accountable," the statement said.

Stephane Dujarric, the United Nations spokesperson, said in a statement late Tuesday that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "very concerned about the Indian military operations across the Line of Control and international border" and called for maximum military restraint from both countries.

"The world cannot afford a military confrontation between India and Pakistan," the statement read.

In Muzaffarabad, the main city of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, resident Abdul Sammad, said he heard several explosions and that some people were wounded in the attack. People were seen running in panic and authorities

immediately cut the power, leading to a blackout.

The blasts ripped through walls. Locals inspected the damage to their homes in the aftermath of the missile attacks, rubble and other debris crunching underfoot.

People took refuge on the streets and in open areas, fearful of what might happen. "We were afraid the next missile might hit our house," said Mohammad Ashraf.

Waqar Noor, the region's interior minister, said authorities have declared an emergency in the region's hospitals.

Pakistan shut schools in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and Punjab province after the missile strikes. It had already had closed religious seminaries in Kashmir in anticipation of an attack by India.

Along the Line of Control, which divides the disputed region of Kashmir between India and Pakistan, there were heavy exchanges of fire between both armies.

Saaliq reported from New Delhi. Associated Press writers Ishfaq Hussain in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan, Babar Dogar in Lahore, Pakistan, and Asim Tarveer in Multan, Pakistan, contributed to this story.