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PAKISTAN

Pakistani Taliban Announces End Of Cease-Fire, Orders Attacks

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Hundreds of people protest on September 30 in the Swat Valley of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province demanding peace.

The banned Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has called off a cease-fire agreed with the government and ordered its fighters to launch attacks across the country.

The announcement from the TTP on November 28 came hours after the Pakistani Foreign Ministry [said](#) it would send a high-level delegation to Kabul.

The TTP said in a statement that the attacks were ordered following the Pakistani security agencies' anti-Taliban operations in Bannu and Lakki Marwat districts in northwestern Pakistan.

There has been no comment from the government, the military, or the regional government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province on the TTP statement.

In its announcement of the delegation's visit to Kabul, the Pakistani Foreign Ministry on November 28 said Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar would head the delegation to discuss regional security with Afghanistan's Taliban-led government.

Other issues to be discussed include cooperation in the areas of education, trade and investment, regional connectivity, and people-to-people contacts, the statement said.

The truce between the Pakistani government and the TTP was agreed in June after Afghanistan's Taliban-led government took a prominent role in brokering peace talks. The TTP follows the same hard-line interpretation of Sunni Islam as their Afghan counterparts, but it has a different organizational setup.

Pakistani authorities held several rounds of negotiations with the TTP, but made little progress, and the TTP continued its attacks on Pakistani security personnel and government officials.

The TTP did not deny breaking the cease-fire, and its self-proclaimed spokesman regularly claimed responsibility for the attacks, including one on November 16 that killed six policemen in the Lakki Marwat district near the Waziristan region. The TTP said the policemen were plotting a raid on their base in the area.

The military has been patrolling the area since November 26 using helicopter gunships to shell TTP hideouts in an attempt to root out the militants.

The TTP statement on November 28 claimed it had shown "continued patience so that the negotiation process is not sabotaged." It added that the army and intelligence agencies continued their attacks, "so now our retaliatory attacks will also start across the country."

With reporting by AFP and dpa
