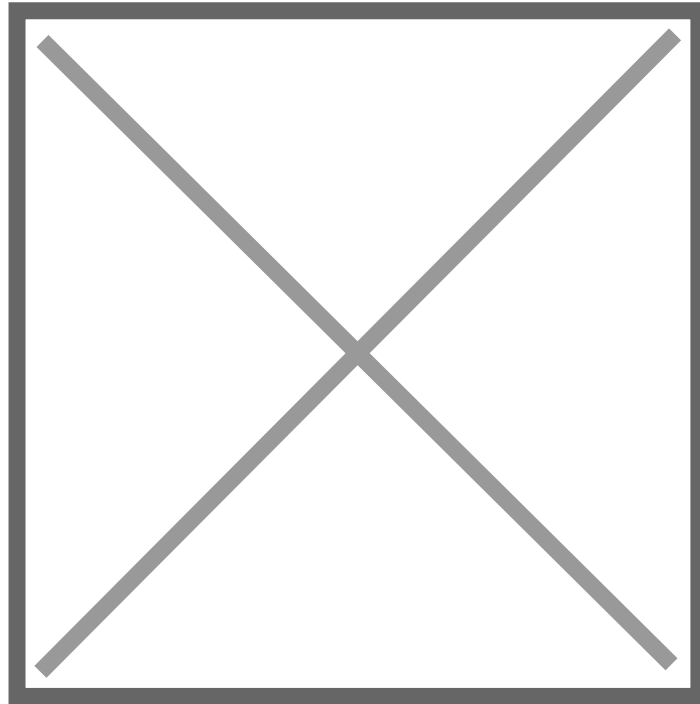

Iran vows 'calculated' response to Israeli strikes



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ISLAMABAD:

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned Israel of a “calculated and accurate” response to its recent strikes on the Islamic Republic as the top diplomat held crucial talks with Pakistani civil and military authorities on Tuesday. Araghchi visited Islamabad as part of Iran’s diplomatic

outreach to take regional countries and neighbours into confidence before responding to Israel's October 26 strikes that killed at least five Iranian soldiers. The Iranian foreign minister held formal talks at the foreign office with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and separately met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir. Official sources familiar with closed-door discussions told The Express Tribune that the Iranian FM expressed gratitude and appreciation for Pakistan's unequivocal stance supporting Iran in the face of its ongoing tensions with Israel. Pakistan strongly condemned the Israeli strikes while the prime minister went a step further by expressing full support to the Iranian side. Sources said that the Iranian FM briefed the Pakistani side about Tehran's current strategy. Araghchi stressed that Iran had the fundamental right to respond to the Israeli what he termed the "act of aggression". Speaking at a joint news conference with Dar, the Iranian FM, however, made it clear that unlike, Israel, his country did not want any escalation in tensions. "The Israeli regime showed its warmongering and aggressive nature more than ever by attacking some of Iran's military sites on October 26. Unlike the Zionist regime, the Islamic Republic does not seek to escalate tensions, however, we reserve our fundamental right to legitimate defence based on Article 50 of the United Nations Charter," the Iranian FM remarked. "We will definitely respond to the Israeli aggression at the right time and in a calculated and precise way," he added. "We deeply thank the government

and people of Pakistan for condemning the Israeli regime's aggression against Iran. Pakistani authorities, particularly Pakistan's esteemed prime minister [Shehbaz Sharif], have taken a clear and firm stance on this matter, for which we are deeply grateful," Araghchi said. In his remarks, Foreign Minister Dar condemned the Israeli genocide in Gaza and Lebanon while extending support to Iran. He referred to Pakistan's clear stance and condemnation of Israeli strikes on Iran.

A foreign office statement said the two ministers noted the longstanding ties between Pakistan and Iran and emphasised the need to strengthen these relations through increased trade, energy cooperation, and enhanced border management. They expressed commitment to exploring avenues for enhancing trade, investment and people-to-people contacts. The deputy prime minister/foreign minister expressed Pakistan's strong interest in deepening bilateral dialogue and cooperation to explore opportunities for regional connectivity. The Iranian FM echoed these sentiments, affirming Iran's readiness to collaborate on mutually beneficial initiatives and promote regional cooperation. Discussing the situation in the Middle East, both sides underscored a shared vision for responding to common challenges through coordinated efforts. Both sides strongly condemned the Israeli genocidal acts in Gaza and expressed their common resolve to support the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. Reaffirming the unique relationship between Pakistan and Iran, the two sides committed to working together for

the mutual benefit of the two countries and peoples. Meanwhile, the Iranian Foreign Minister said, “Muslim countries are working hard to deal with this crisis and stop the crimes of the Zionist regime.” He asserted that “At the upcoming meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, we will try to find a solution in order to end the Israeli crimes and reduce the suffering of the people of Gaza and Lebanon, especially as the winter approaches, which will increase the hardship and suffering of the displaced people and refugees in Gaza and Lebanon.” “The government and people of Pakistan have also strongly supported the people of Gaza and Palestine over the past year. Unfortunately, the international community has failed to stop the Israeli genocide against the people of Gaza and its acts of aggression, which endanger both regional and global security and stability,” Iran’s top diplomat stressed. Elsewhere in his remarks, Araghchi emphasised Iran’s determination and commitment to deepen and boost its friendly, brotherly, and neighbourly relations with Pakistan by strengthening cooperation between the two sides in all areas, including economic, trade, political, scientific, cultural, and tourism sectors.