

China offers help to Myanmar to end unrest near border; increases army presence along boundary

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Beijing: After series of attacks by ethnic armed groups on Myanmar security forces and thousands of people crossing into China to escape the violence, Beijing on Wednesday offered help to the Southeast Asian nation to stabilise their shared border.

A sign near a bridge linking China with Myanmar

China said that it was worried about the risk of violence in northern Myanmar spilling onto its side of the border, as it did last year, when five Chinese people were killed.

"Both sides should properly use the China-Myanmar high-level diplomatic and military mechanism to jointly maintain the peace and stability of the China-Myanmar border region," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a statement here on Wednesday.

According to reports, China has also increased the presence of its army along the country's southern border with Myanmar. This comes after the conflict between the government and ethnic minorities worsened causing an influx of refugees.

Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson Yang Yujun on Wednesday said that the People's Liberation Army has made preparations at the border to deal with possible emergencies and safeguard the country's sovereignty and safety of people.

According to reports, the Chinese army is also cooperating with the local government to properly resettle more than 3,000 persons who have fled the conflict in Myanmar and crossed into China.

Since November 20, the conflict between the Burmese army and the militia of three ethnic minorities in northern Myanmar has escalated, causing at least one missile to fall on Chinese soil.

In a separate incident, a stray bullet in Chinese territory injured a citizen.

Yang said that such incidents are cause for concern in China and he strongly urged the relevant parties to take effective measures to control military operations in the border region.

In March 2015, shelling from Myanmar during clashes between the army and the Kokkang minority caused the deaths of five peasants in the southern Chinese province of Yunnan, provoking Beijing to declare an emergency in the region and conduct military drills.

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