



### Border Clashes Continue Between China and India

China and India are engaged in a border dispute, with several clashes occurring in recent weeks. The two nuclear-armed neighbors disagree over where the border between the countries falls in the Galwan Valley, a Himalayan region. A recent scuffle between border guards from both countries left 20 Indian soldiers dead, and while China has not released official losses, Indian leaders have said their forces inflicted casualties. India has accused China of constructing observation posts and other military structures on its side of the border, an accusation China disputes, saying the installations are on Chinese territory. India and China share a border of roughly 2,200 miles, with much of it unmarked.

In a phone call late last week, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar told his Chinese counterpart that Indian troops began destroying Chinese structures on the Indian side of the border, as had been agreed in a prior conversation between the two. However, according to Jaishankar, Chinese troops attacked the Indian soldiers with iron rods and clubs with spikes, killing 20. The clash was the deadliest between Indian and Chinese troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) since 1967, and it marked the first time lives on either side were lost since 1975.

China and India have been engaged in bilateral talks to reduce the tensions along the border, with the situation seemingly deescalating prior to the recent clashes. Local commanders from both sides had met for face-to-face talks and agreed to settle their differences without resorting to violence. The situation along the LAC has been tense since Chinese troops began patrolling neutral areas between the two countries' borders, and began erecting military camps and watchtowers. The Galwan Valley, a Himalayan area where the LAC falls, was unilaterally claimed by China last week, and Chinese troops advanced across the Chinese border and into Indian territory, violating prior boundary agreements. In doing this, Beijing reneged on previous statements and actions, in which it accepted Indian control of areas within the Galwan Valley.

India and China fought a war over the borders in 1962, which the current disagreement stems from. During the war, China occupied territory in Aksai Chin, which was part of India's Jammu and Kashmir state, now known as the Union Territory of Ladakh. At the conclusion of the war, China continued to occupy the territory, despite India still claiming the land. Conversely, China claims territory in India's state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China considers to be part of Tibet.

In response to the recent clashes, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed Indian forces had the ability and desire to defend their sovereignty at all costs. Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party have long embraced a nationalist platform, and the encroachment by Chinese forces is an embarrassment for New Delhi. However, Indian leaders have also stressed their desire for peaceful reconciliation, as bilateral trade between the two countries is vital for both economies.