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Pak-Afghan officials agree to pursue talks with Taliban groups willing to join peace

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The Afghan and Pakistani officials have agreed to pursue talks with the Taliban groups willing to join peace process, the sources said Sunday.

The agreement along with other measures to improve the bilateral relations between the two nations was reached during the Pakistani Chief of Army Staff Gen. Raheel Sharif's visit to Kabul.

The Presidential Palace in a statement said President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani met with the Gen. Raheel Sharif and the two sides agreed to pursue talks with the Taliban groups willing to join peace and reconciliation process.

The statement further added that the two nations will agree to act against those groups willing to pursue violence as per the framework that would be mutually agreed.

The two sides also discussed effective ways on curbing the open activities of the terror groups, the statement said, adding that an agreement was reached not to allow the use of each other's soil by terrorist groups.

The statement also added that a quadrilateral meeting between Afghanistan, Pakistan, United States and China will be held in the month of January next year to prepare a comprehensive plan to achieve peace and stability.

The meeting was also attended by Afghan Foreign Minister, acting Afghan Defense Minister, Acting Afghan Intelligence Chief, Afghan Army Chief of Staff and other high level government officials.

Pakistan facilitated the first round of direct peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban group in Islamabad this year but the second round of the talks scheduled in July failed with the disclosure of the death of Taliban founder and supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar.

Tensions between Kabul and Islamabad also escalated following a series of deadly attacks across the country and capital Kabul as Taliban launched their summer offensive this year, with Afghan officials slamming Islamabad for sheltering the anti-government armed militants in their soil from where they coordinate and execute attacks in Afghanistan.