



Date: December 1, 2020

To,

Justice (Retd.) A.K. Sikri

Chairperson, News Broadcasting Standards Authority

C/o News Broadcasters Association

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Cc: Ms Annie Joseph,

For and on behalf of NBSA News Broadcasting Standards Authority

C/o News Broadcasters Association News Broadcasting Standards Authority

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SUB: Complaint by CJP against News Nations for broadcasting a communal show called 'Conversion Jihad'

Dear Sir,

Citizens for Justice & Peace (cjp.org.in) an organisation committed to furthering human rights of all Indians in the Courts and beyond, is duly filing this complaint with all the details as given below:

A complaint about News Nation's show called Conversion Jihad has already been made to News Nation's Senior Executive Editor Mr. Ajay Verma (ajay.verma@newsnation.in) on November 12, 2020. However, we have received no

reply from News Nation so far. Hence, this complaint is being filed within the prescribed time limit to NBSA. The complaint to News Nation is annexed hereto as **Annexure-A**.

On November 6, this show reported on one Memchand and his family from Mewat, Rajasthan who were allegedly forced to convert their religion, consume cow meat and threatened by Tabhligi Jamaat members. He questioned the 'secular gang' of India and claimed to have exposed a conspiracy to completely wash away Hindus of India. "*Ekgirohiss Hindustan se hinduon ko mitaane ki saajish khule aam kar raha hai*" (One gang is openly plotting to do away with all Hindus of Hindustan), he said on the show.

Further, Deepak Chaurasia called Maulana Syed-ulQadri on his show and kept shouting over Maulana's words asking for an explanation behind alleged conversions. He also went one step ahead and asked Maulana Qadri to tender an apology on behalf of the entire Muslim community. Referring to him as "*Jhootki Factor*" (A factory of lies), Deepak Chaurasia blatantly allows hate speech on his show.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad's Vinod Bansal was provided a platform to propagate virulent Islamophobic ideas on the *Conversion Jihad* show hosted by Deepak Chaurasia on November 6. He said, "*Yeh log maar maar ke musalman banana chahte hai. Sabse zyada aatankwaad, sabse zyada dharmantarn, sabse zyada utpedan aur sabse zayada hinduon ka cheer haran, agar kissi ne kiyahai, who islam ko maane wale logo ne kiya hai*" (These people want to violently force Hindus to convert. People who follow Islam are responsible for terrorism, conversion, harassment, stripping/humiliating Hindus).

Vinod Bansal further adds that Islamic people end up playing the victim card and don't let Hindu's raise a voice against this atrocity. This is Islam's "*asli chehra*"

(reality) and there is a Jamaat that leads people to indulge in anti-national and anti-religion activities, he said on the show. Throughout the show there is an attempt to vilify the Jamaat members. We would like to bring to your attention that the Bombay High Court has rescued the Tabhligi Jamaat members from further condemnation and acknowledged the disparaging reports on them.

The Court observed, *“There was big propaganda in print media and electronic media against the foreigners who had come to Markaz Delhi and an attempt was made to create a picture that these foreigners were responsible for spreading covid-19 virus in India. There was virtually persecution against these foreigners. A political Government tries to find the scapegoat when there is pandemic or calamity and the circumstances show that there is probability that these foreigners were chosen to make them scapegoats.”*

The court had further slammed the Government for its malicious intentions of instilling fear in the minds of Muslims in India and based it on the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act which is inherently discriminatory towards Muslims. The court said, *“It can be said that due to the present action taken fear was created in the minds of those Muslims. This action indirectly gave warning to Indian Muslims that action in any form and for anything can be taken against Muslims. It was indicated that even for keeping contact with Muslims of other countries, action will be taken against them. Thus, there is smell of malice to the action taken against these foreigners and Muslim for their alleged activities.”*

This malicious content is also up on YouTube, posted on November 5 and has received 19,798 views. The comment section under the video reeks of anti-minority sentiments with people suggesting that the Islamic faith is the biggest enemy of humanity and the entire universe. Islam means aatankwaad (terrorism) and reading Gita to Hindu children and training them to use weapons in order to protect their sanathan dharm (Hinduism) are some of the ideas dropped in the comment box to further subdue Muslims. The video can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CE7i8cDrwoI>

Deepak Chaurasia clearly appears to sell hate by insinuating that the 'Hindustan' we are living in is no longer safe for Hindus. He appeals to his viewers that it is time to stand together against this injustice of forceful conversion of Hindus by Muslims. Throughout the show one can see captions like "*Mem chand Zinda hai...Jamaat Sharminda hai*" (Memchand is alive and Tabhligi Jamaat members are ashamed), "*5000 Hindu kaise banaye Muslim?*" (How did 5000 Hindus become Muslims?), "*Mewat kya Pakistan ban gaya?*" (Has Mewat become Pakistan?) and "*Maulana Gang exposed*".

His video on Twitter has already received 3,300 views and 1,200 retweets by netizens all across the country. He further seems to be consolidating support through comments like "Faasi do jihaadiyo ko" (hang the Jihaadis), "I stand with you", "secularism has ruined the country" by users. The video can be seen here:

<https://twitter.com/DChaurasia2312/status/1324576789658652672>

In another instance of shameful display of anti-Muslim content on News Nation, anchor Deepak Chaurasia entertained a Delhi University professor of Political Science Sangit Kumar Raagi's idea of banning the Quran on September 14, 2020. Professor Raagi claimed that the Quran teaches Muslims to practise violence against Hindus. He goes on to say that Islam and Terrorism are synonyms and that Islam is the origin of terrorism. ("*Islam atankhwaad ka paryay bana hua hai. Islam har jagaha atankhwaad paida karr raha hai*").

Allowed to run un-interrupted on News Nation, Raagi also targeted Shaheen Bagh and said "*iss desh me inek Shaheen Bagh nahi, saikro shaheen bagh khade kiye jaa rahe hai*" (India does not have only one Shaheen Bagh but there is an attempt to create more Shaheen Bagh's). A clip from this News Nation show was posted on YouTube on

September 14 which has received a whopping 35, 489 views. Deepak Chaurasia's attempt to tarnish the reputation of Muslims is getting brazen validation through comments below the video in support of Raagi. The video can be seen here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcmaRk_me80

Violations of the NBSA principles and guidelines

Deepak Chaurasia is known for his vehement anti-Muslim debates on live television peddling hate against the minority Muslims of India. With its unethical reporting on the Delhi Riots, calling it a pre meditated conspiracy to supporting the idea of a 'Population Control' law to restrict Muslims from having more than 2 children, he is perpetuating dangerous polarisation of the society.

This program on *Conversion Jihad* violates the Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards set out by the News Broadcasters Standards Authority (NBSA). The **Fundamental Principles** which the show violates are as follows:

4) Broadcasters shall, in particular, ensure that they do not select news for the purpose of either promoting or hindering either side of any controversial public issue. News shall not be selected or designed to promote any particular belief, opinion or desires of any interest group.

6) Broadcasters shall ensure a full and fair presentation of news as the same is the fundamental responsibility of each news channel. Realizing the importance of presenting all points of view in a democracy, the broadcaster should, therefore, take responsibility in ensuring that controversial subjects are fairly presented, with time being allotted fairly to each point of view. Besides, the selection of items of news shall also be governed by public interest and importance based on the significance of these items of news in a democracy.

The **Principles of Self-Regulation** that the show violates is as follows:

2) Ensuring neutrality- TV news channels must provide for neutrality by offering equality for all affected parties, players and actors in any dispute or conflict to present their point of view. Though neutrality does not always come down to giving equal space to all sides (news channels shall strive to give main view points of the main parties) news channels must strive to ensure that allegations are not portrayed as fact and charges are not conveyed as an act of guilt.

The program, further violates **Specific Guidelines Covering Reportage:**

2. Impartiality, Neutrality & Fairness

2.1 For balanced reportage, broadcasters should remain neutral and ensure that diverse views are covered in their reporting, especially on a controversial subject, without giving undue prominence to any particular view.

9. Racial & Religious Harmony

9.1 Racial and religious stereotyping should be avoided.

9.2 Caution should be exercised in reporting content which denigrates or is likely to offend the sensitivities of any racial or religious group or that may create religious intolerance or disharmony.

The Code of Ethics are to be followed by TV news channels in India to uphold the true spirit of journalism and to avoid misuse of the freedom of speech bestowed upon by the Constitution of India. As per the “Code of Ethics and broadcasting Standards” issued by the News Broadcasters Association (NBA) makes it the responsibility of the broadcaster to “evolve institutional checks and safeguards that can define the path that would conform to the highest standards of rectitude and

journalistic ethics and guide the media in the discharge of its solemn constitutional duty”.

Violations of the Indian Penal Code

Indulging in hate speech and promoting social disharmony with the content of its Conversion Jihad show, News Nation is not only discriminating against Muslims but also creating a hostile environment for them. The show stands in contravention of the IPC sections:

153A states that, [Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise, promotes or attempts to promote, on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, or commits any act which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, and which disturbs or is likely to disturb the public tranquillity, or shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both];

153B(1)(c) [Whoever, by words either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise - makes or publishes any assertion, counsel, plea or appeal concerning the obligation of any class of persons, by reason of their being members of any religious, racial, language or regional group or caste or community, and such assertion, counsel, plea or appeal causes or is likely to cause disharmony or feelings of enmity or hatred or ill-will between such members and other persons, shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both];

295A [Deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs];

298 [Uttering, words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person] and

505 [Statements conducing to public mischief].

In order to respect the diverse religions and composite cultures of India, it is essential to keep a check on the unverified claims and hate propaganda against Muslims. Targeting a particular community fosters a spirit of discrimination and needs immediate attention to protect the secular fabric of India.

In *Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan v. Union of India*, (Ref: AIR 2014 SC 1591, at para. 7.) the Supreme Court has unambiguously stated that hate speech is an effort to marginalise individuals based on their membership to a group, that can have a social impact. Moreover, the Court stated that hate speech lays the groundwork for broad attacks on the vulnerable that can range from discrimination, to ostracism, deportation, violence, and even to genocide.

The Law Commission Report, 2017 stated that *“Hate speech has the potential of provoking individuals or society to commit acts of terrorism, genocides, ethnic cleansing etc. Such speech is considered outside the realm of protective discourse. Indisputably, offensive speech has real and devastating effects on people’s lives and risks their health and safety. It is harmful and divisive for communities and hampers social progress. If left unchecked hate speech can severely affect right to life of every individual.”*

In the Sudarshan News case (*Firoz Iqbal Khan v Union of India- W.P [Civ.] No. 956 of 2020*), the Supreme Court had observed that, *“the edifice of a democratic society committed to the rule of law under a regime of constitutional rights, values and duties is*



founded on the co-existence of communities. India is a melting pot of civilizations, cultures, religions and languages. Any attempt to vilify a religious community must be viewed with grave disfavour by this Court as the custodian of constitutional values. Its duty to enforce constitutional values demands nothing less.

Our bonafide intention is to bring to the attention of this authority the misuse of broadcasting by sectarian elements like Deepak Chaurasia which can be considered not just as an act against national integration but violative of the fundamental tenets and values as enshrined in the Indian Constitution based at it is on fraternity, equality, non-discrimination and equality before law. Only if strict action is taken against such perpetrators, a strong message can be sent to personalities spitting venom on news channels and misusing the freedom of speech guaranteed by our Constitution. Free Speech is not Hate Speech, Hon'ble Sir as the latter often misuses positions of power and privilege to further marginalise and stigmatize a section that is structurally, socially and politically dis-advantaged. Unchecked proliferation of such telecasts by the electronic media have the deleterious impact of mis-informing and prejudicing public discourse, often as a precursor to social ostracization and even violence.

Further, the broadcast is also prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony and has disturbed public tranquillity as it blatantly promotes hatred, distrust, and discrimination against the minority community by placing blame on them for some sort of deep-rooted conspiracy against the rest of Indians. In doing so, the statements displace harmony and exacerbate religious tensions by portraying Muslims as villains and wrongdoers. Therefore, the ingredients for an offence under Section 153A(a) are satisfied and an offence under the section is clearly made out, with punishment of imprisonment extendable to 3 years, or fine, or both.

Moreover, these discriminatory statements and unverified claims amount to generating an atmosphere that can lead to mass violence and targeting of the

Muslim community. '**Journalism as genocide**' is a context that is being documented worldwide especially after Rwanda. The hatred perpetrated by the Media has destroyed and damaged the lives of ordinary people. Since March 2020, in a seemingly concerted and perpetrated way news broadcasters are mis-using and manipulating the term "Jehad/Jihad" and using it as a tool in public discourse to further objectify the Muslim community.

The community subjected to this form of vicious hatred has been transformed from being persons to objects. This dehumanization has resulted in calls for elimination of the community and the same is nothing short of a call for genocide. The call to genocide is a violation of the right to life and personal liberty of an entire community under Article 21 of the Constitution, and needs to be dealt with strictly. The calls for social and economic boycott being made are the precursors to genocide. Hate speech which repeatedly dehumanizes an entire community, makes them targets of vigilante violence.

PRAYERS

It is prayed that the NBSA take cognizance of the aforementioned violations and it is further prayed that the NBSA

- 1) Direct News Nation to remove the program on Conversion Jihad (Dharmantar Jihad) from their website, YouTube channel and any other digital platforms.
- 2) Direct News Nation to issue a public apology on its channel for posting such hateful content and for hurting the sentiments of certain communities.
- 3) Direct News Nation to refrain from broadcasting or posting any such content which would contravene the tenets of our constitution which promotes harmony, dialogue and fraternity between all sections of Indians.



- 4) Direct News Nation to refrain from broadcasting or posting, in the future, any such content which would violate the Code of Ethics and other guidelines issued by the NBSA.
- 5) Direct News Nation to provide Proportionate Monetary Compensation to a Citizen's Group like CJP battling the vicious politics of hatred.
- 6) Take any other punitive action that the Authority deems fit.

We urge strict action to be taken against such provocative, incendiary and anti-social elements that work with no inhibitions to promote enmity between communities.

Background

Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) is a human rights movement dedicated to upholding and defending our fundamental freedoms, in the courts and beyond. With a presence in all states of India, CJP draws its strength from the people who are determined to protect the rights of every individual, especially the weak and marginalised.

CJP has been actively campaigning against Hate Speech. Our objective is to not just bring to light such instances, but also help people understand what constitutes hate speech and the fundamental difference between Freedom of Speech and Hate Speech. We seek to empower citizens with knowledge of the law and mechanisms of its application with concerned authorities. We have pursued our objectives on two fronts; by publishing informative and educative content about hate speech on our website, and by filing complaints and petitions against the perpetrators.

CJP had, in the recent past, brought to your attention a communal video on Sudarshan News, a television news channel alleging '[UPSC Jihad](#)' questioning the sudden rise in the numbers of Muslims in IAS/IPS. It was broadcast not only on the channel but also uploaded on its various social media profiles. Since Sudarshan TV



is not a member of NBA, our complaint dated September 1, 2020 was forwarded by the NBSA to the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (Mo I&B).

We have also flagged instances of hate speech, like that of religious televangelist Zakir Naik's hateful utterances that continue to pose a threat to the ideals of secularism and plurality, embedded in our Constitutional framework. He claims to reach a massive audience of over 20 million followers worldwide. The video by CJP can be seen here:

<https://cjp.org.in/hate-watch-zakir-naiks-unchecked-bigotry-promotes-religious-discord/>

In furtherance of our Hate Watch campaign that we believe is in complete adherence to Constitutional Values of fraternity, equality and non-discrimination as enshrined in the Preamble to the Indian Constitution and embedded in the Fundamental Rights (Chapter III) and Directive Principles of State Policy (Chapter IV), CJP had also moved NBSA against Zee News for broadcasting a highly offensive show called '[DNA test of Islamic conversion of land in Jammu](#)', propagating different types of Jihad in the country and the negative connotations attached to it. Observing that the broadcast had violated the fundamental principles of Code of Ethics such as impartiality, objectivity, neutrality, fairness in reporting and other guidelines, NBSA acted on CJP's complaint and held that the, "tone and tenor of the programme was divisive and that the broadcast certainly was targeting a particular community which is against the secular ethos of our country." The proceedings in this matter are on-going and the last hearing between Zee News and CJP was at a joint hearing on November 26, 2020.

We have kept our endeavour to fight hate crime alive and on-going and in this process, we have come across the news channel 'News Nation' inventing terminology of its own kind of '*Dharmantar Jihad*' (*Conversion Jihad*) after Sudarshan News' *UPSC Jihad* and Zee News' report on *Zameen Jihad*. Deepak Chaurasia, the



Consulting Editor of News Nations TV is seen talking about *Conversion Jihad* on national television and clips from the debate have also been uploaded on his Twitter account. The video on Twitter can be seen here:

<https://twitter.com/DChaurasia2312/status/1324764128653709313>

There can be not enough said to emphasise the cumulative and deleterious impact of such sustained hate propaganda by the electronic media. We urge therefore that the matter is seen in its entirety and totality as well.

Yours sincerely,

Anil Dharker, President

Teesta Setalvad, Secretary

Annexure A

CJP Complaint to News Nation dated 12-11-2020