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**TV. TODAY NETWORK LTD.**

India Today Group Mediaplex

FC 8, Sector 16 A, Film City, Noida – 201301

Tel +91 120 4908600 Fax: +91 120 4325028

Website: www.aajtak.in

CIN No : L92200DL1999PLC103001



07.11.2019

To,  
**Citizens for Justice and Peace**  
Through its President  
Mr. Anil Dharker  
Niran, Juhu Tara Road, Juhu,  
Santacruz (West), Mumbai-40049

Ref: “Your Complaint with regards to the contents published by Aaj Tak”

**REPLY TO YOUR COMPLAINT DATED 17.10.2019**

Dear Sir,

We are in receipt of your Complaint dated 17.10.2019 which was issued by you to TV Today Network Ltd.’

The contents of the Complaint are being briefly referred herein. It is worth mentioning that the above Complaint was towards the contents published/aired by Aaj Tak (hereinafter referred to as “The News Channel”) via social media as well as through broadcast medium on television.

- i. The first reference was made by you to the show aired on the News Channel which was uploaded on the YouTube Channel of Aaj Tak on 16.10.2019. The title of the show being “**देश के सबसे बड़े फैसले पर सबसे बड़ी बहस अयोया से Rohit Sardana के साथ.**” You raised an objection to certain statement made by one “Swami Karpatri Ji Maharaj” in the said debate. Your objection rests on the point that the same was provocative and the statement was made without a disclaimer by the News Channel especially when the verdict on the said statement is awaited. You have also alleged that the content was aired by the News Channel despite NBSA’s special advisory dated 16.10.2019 to be extra cautious while conducting such debates and the same has not been followed by the news channel.

- ii. The second reference has been made to the tweet that was posted through the verified Twitter Account of Aaj Tak on 15.10.2019 wherein the graphic complementing the tweet contains the following caption: “**Yaamabhumii Hamaari, Ram Hamaare, Masjid Waale Khan Se Padhare?**” It has been alleged by you that the tweet has been put out to provoke negative



sentiments against one community and is an attempt to sensationalize the Ayodhya case news coverage. Violation of the NBSA's guidelines has been also alleged by you. Vide the said Complaint the News Channel has been asked to retract and remove it.

**A. Reply to the First Reference:**

- i. Any news debate telecasted by our News Channel is directed towards fostering civility in public discourse on the issues that are relevant in day to day lives of the people of this country. The debates aim towards bringing the people with different ideological background on one platform and put their opinion on an issue which can be solved by healthy exchange of opinion and intellectual deliberations. The debates also act as an educative tool to the masses.
- ii. Similarly, "Swami Karpari Ji Maharaj" was one of the panelists in the debate aired by the News Channel who has inclination towards a particular ideology (which he represented on the panel) that like any other ideology has been nourished in India on account of its pluralist society. The News Channel promotes ideological diversity.
- iii. You are accordingly informed that as the News Channel respects the Freedom of Speech and Expression of every individual as enshrined in the Constitution of India, therefore, it was not appropriate to show a disclaimer as the same happened spontaneously. The statement of a panelist cannot be attributed to the News Channel but solely to the narrator who express it. It should be highlighted that the News Channel through its anchor only moderates the discourse and in no way expresses its own opinion without being meaningful and courteous.

**B. Reply on the Second Reference:**

- i. At the outset, we state that the premise on which the allegations were made are based have been falsely assumed and incorrectly appreciated. The said caption is not something that was coined and invented by the News Channel especially for the purpose of telecast. Rather, the same was taken out of the discussion that took place in the Courtroom during the hearing of Civil Appeal in the Ayodhya dispute. This is to emphasize that the present comment only came into light during the course of hearing. Also, the premise of the arguments put by the Hindu Mahasabha before the Hon'ble Supreme Court was based on the same idea which the caption speaks of and that have been reiterated by them before the Hon'ble Apex Court several times.

ii. We, further, state that on careful perusal of the said Caption it appears that the same was enclosed within two inverted commas ( ' ) which affirms the fact that it was reproduction of a statement/an argument made by someone which was quoted by the News Channel. Further, it was just a teaser of the program and never came into picture at anytime during broadcast of the said story. The intention of the News Channel cannot be said to be infused with *mala fide*.

iii. The India Today group including the News Channel is law abiding and have been recognized and awarded for their independent journalism several times. On perusal of the said caption it is impossible for any reasonable person to reach at a conclusion that it has been put out to provoke negative sentiments against one community or is an attempt to sensationalize the Ayodhya case news coverage. Reproduction of a fact before the public is the foremost duty casted upon every journalist, the News Channel has merely followed it. Further, kindly note that quoting a comment that also forms part of the record cannot be said to be speculation. Also, in no way does such telecast can cause public disharmony or violates any direction set by the NBSA.

iv. The truth has to be representation as it is and the News Channel has done the same. It is stated that freedom of press is essential to the political liberty. The intention of the News Channel behind the present tweet was not to induce public to form a certain opinion but to bring before them the point of view of one of the parties to a dispute that has been going on for decades. Therefore, putting an impediment on the true and fair reporting with a whip will be nothing but unconstitutional.

We, therefore, deny each and every averment made by you in the Complaint under reply, save and except what has been specifically admitted.

Yours Faithfully,

  
(M.N.Nasser Kabir)



Group General Counsel

