



Date: May 29, 2023

To,
Times Now,
Grievance Officer,
Kirtima Maravoor
Email: legalnow@timesgroup.com

Subject: Complaint against “धामी सरकार का 'ऑपरेशन मजार', 'गजवा-ए-हिंद' की साजिश के किससे जुड़े तार?” show aired on Times Now Navbharat on May 22, 2023

Dear Madam,

We, at Citizens for Justice and Peace are writing to you about a show aired on Times Now Navbharat called “धामी सरकार का 'ऑपरेशन मजार', 'गजवा-ए-हिंद' की साजिश के किससे जुड़े तार?” which aired on May 22, 2023. Throughout the show, the reporter visits places in Haridwar and Jim Corbett where the (now) demolished mazaars once existed. It relies on “Government data” and “sources” and tries to formulate a link between the dargahs/mazaars and the increase in Muslim population across Uttarakhand and specifically, “Dev Bhoomi Haridwar”.

The video of the show can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ik2TAW73wp4>

The main contention about the show is how the host repeatedly uses and displays the terms “*Mazaar jibad*” and “*land jibad*”. Such name calling is in clear violation of previous order and reprimands therein and multiple guidelines issued by the NBDSA, to which the channel has clearly turned a deaf ear.

Through time stamps we have extracted some objectionable portions of the show which are the subject of our complaint:

“Uttarakhand me bulldozer chal raha hai, ‘land jihad’ ke khilaf. Ye prahar ho raha hai us sazish ke khilaf jisme Dehradun se lekar Haridwar aur Rajaji Park tak me Avidh mazaar banakr jangalon ki zameen par kabze ki sazish rachi jar hi hai. Haridwar ki zameen par mazaar ka khel kaise khela gya.”

(Bulldozers are being set off against ‘land jihad’ in Uttarakhand. This attack is against the conspiracy of building illegal mazaars from Dehradun to Haridwar to Rajaji Park. How they have played the game of mazaars in Haridwar)

Time stamp- (00:08- 00:27)

“Haridwar Hinduo ki dharmic Aastha ka kendra hai. Lekin mazaaro ka jaal aisa faila, ki usne kathit demography ko change kardia. Aisa hum nahi Sarkari aankdo wali list bolti hai.” (Haridwar is a holy land for Hindus. But the trap of Mazaars was spread in such a way that the demography of the area was changed. We are not the ones saying this. This is in the government data)

Time stamp- (2:11- 2:22)

(They then flashed the numbers on the screen that the Muslim population ***“har saal me 40% ki raftaar se badhi rahi”*** (Every year the population is growing by 40%)

Time Stamp- (2:24)

“Haridwar ki agar main baat karu to 39 se 43 percent demographic change aaya hai. Aur sarkar ka dawa ye bhi hai ki isi tarah ke atikraman ke baad is tarah ki jansankhya me badhat aai hai.” (If we speak about Haridwar, the demographic has changed by 39-43%. The government claims that only after this encroachment have the demographics changed in such a manner)

Time Stamp- (2:30-2:43)

“Devsthali kahe jaane wale Haridwar ki jo aaj hum tasveer dikh rahe he hain ki dharm ki aad me log kya se kya kar jate hain”. (After seeing the pictures of Haridwar, it is apparent, what can people do under the guise of religion)

Time Stamp- (2:59- 3:09)

“Ye jo atikraman hai yaha par kisi aur neeyat se kie gae the, ek sazish ki boo zaroor aati hai.” (This encroachment reeks on conspiracy)

Time Stamp- (7:40- 7:48)

“Bataya ja rha hai ye mazaarein sandighdh kisam ke logo ki sharanisthali aur nashakhori ka adda ban gai hain” (it is being said that these mazaaras have become an abode of dubious people and also some drug addicts)

Time Stamp- (8:18- 8:24)

“Jankaar batate hain ki Uttarakhand rajya banne se pehle yaha naam matra ki muslim aabadi hua karti thi lekin saal 2010 aur 2020 ke kaalkhand me yaha jangalo ke bheetar yaha achanak mazarein nazar aane lagi. Ab yaha urs manaya jata hai, loudspeaker ke shor ke sath kawwalia gai jati hain. Vankarmi karawahi karne ki himmat nahi juta paate. Lekin ab Uttarakhand ki Dhami sarkar is ‘land jihad’ par attack kar rhi hai.”

(Experts say that before Uttarakhand state was formed there was barely any Muslim population here. However, between 2010 and 2020, suddenly many mazaars came up in the forests. Now they celebrate Urs here and play loud qawwalis on loudspeakers. Forest officers are afraid to conduct inquiry. But now the Dhami government in Uttarakhand is attacking these mazaars)

Time Stamp- (8:54-9:17)

“CM Pushkar Singh Dhami ne saaf kardia hai ki Uttarakhand ke sanatan Swaroop ko banae rakhne ke lie zameen jihad, mazaar jihad ko kisi bhi keemat par bardasht nahi kia ja sakta”.

(CM Pushkar Dhama has clearly said that to keep the Sanatan character of Uttarakhand intact, zameen jihad, mazaar jihad will not be tolerated)

Time Stamp- (10:03- 10:13)

The following text is repeatedly displayed throughout the debate which suggests that the intention of the channel was to spread stigma, even hatred against the Muslim community. This also amounts to creating a narrative that is anti-Muslim' to add fuel to the existing, perpetuated animosity against a minority Indian community that has been widely prevalent, conspicuously due to reportage such as this example. The channel must be aware that the "mainstream", "commercial" media, which it is also a part of, has been responsible for disseminating such a stigma-driven for several years now leading to sharp, recent remarks from the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India (September-November 2022).

- ***Avaiddh Mazaar... Gajva-e-Hind ke taar*** (illegal mazaars connected to Gazwa-e-hind (Muslim nation)) (Time Stamp: 00:02)
- ***Devbhoomi me 'Mazaar Jihad' sajizh kiski?*** (Mazaar jihad on the land of gods. Whose conspiracy is it?) (Time Stamp: 00:06)
- ***'Mazaar Jihad' ka mastermind kaun?*** (Who is the mastermind of mazaar jihad?) (Time Stamp: 00:11)
- ***Dhama Sarkar ka 'Operation Mazaar'*** (Dhama government's mazaar jihad) (00:37)
- ***Devbhoomi me khatam hoga 'land jihad'*** (Land jihad will be over in the Land of gods) (Time Stamp: 00.42)

The host starts the news segment with biased questions like "Aakhir Uttarakhand me mazaaro ka sach kya hai? Aakhir mazaaro ke naam par atikraman ko lekar Uttarakhand ki sarkar bulldozer kyu chala rahi hai?" (Time Stamp: 00:39- 00:46) that raise one-sided questions in the minds of the audience. The correlation between an increase of Muslim population in Haridwar region to the rise of mazaars in the region is quite baseless. He also analyses the modus operandi behind how these illegal mazaars are built by capturing government lands and adds that they go to the forest areas of Jim Corbett and build small structures and light incense sticks. Then, people start visiting the area and it gets crowded. This shows biased and one-sided reporting done by the news channel. The focus only on mazaars instead of including all the structures reflects the intention to create a bias in the minds of the people.

Laws, statutory guidelines and evolving jurisprudence have tested and assessed this kind of portrayal and held it to be in fact creating an unequal, partisan playing field that both demeans right to life and right to life with dignity of that particular targeted section. In practice, therefore it attacks the right to equality and nondiscrimination, too. Any news channel following the principles laid down by the NBDSA and going by journalistic ethics would have just presented the news as whereby a government report has claimed that illegal mazaars were found in Uttarakhand and presenting what has been found or alleged. However, Times Now Navbharat is one of the main propagators of the Anti-Muslim narrative. The usage of terms like "Mazaar Jihad" and "land jihad" shows the bias in their reporting. Indulging in such name calling is extremely unbecoming of a news channel.



If the intention of the channel was to simply report on the government report and show a ground report, the same would have been only fact based and the show would not have resorted to any kind of name calling of a specific and marginalized section of the population.

Already in Uttarakhand miscreants have destroyed mazaars claiming they are on government lands, thus taking law in their hands. What could follow is intense scrutiny of [places of religious importance to the Muslims and the feeling of othering will only metastasize within the community affecting not just their social life but it could push them to brink of fleeing from what clearly will transition in religious persecution. The fact that the news media will be the main reason for such persecution which is already happening around us, but only at a higher degree in the future, will be a matter of shame for every citizen of this country.

Conclusion

Through the content of the show, the channel has acted in complete violation of the Code of Ethics & Broadcasting Standards issued by the NBDSA and few other guidelines pertaining to maintenance of religious harmony. It further amounts to certain offences related to hate speech, misinformation and promoting enmity under the Indian Penal Code. As such, in view of the elaborate and detailed complaint made herein above, we expect your channel to take responsibility of the grievances raised herein and act upon the same responsibly. In view of this, it is in best interest, that you remove the above-mentioned content from all social media accounts of your channel and your own website, and issue a public apology for the communal reportage. In an event we do not receive a satisfactory response from you, we will be compelled to submit a complaint to the NBDSA. You are also put on notice that failure on your part to satisfy the complainants with an apology on your news channel may result in legal consequences for your channel at the appropriate fora, at your risk to costs.

Yours sincerely,

Nandan Maluste, CJP President

Teesta Setalvad, CJP Secretary