

Date: May 14, 2025

To,

M.N. Naseer Kabir

Group General Counsel, Indian Today Group

TV Today Network Ltd.

FC 8, Sec. 16 A, Film City, Noida 201301

Email: grievanceofficer@aatk.com

Subject: Complaint regarding the dissemination of inaccurate and misleading visuals during the broadcasts by Aaj Tak on May 7 and 9, 2025

Respected Sir,

We, at Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP), are writing to file a formal complaint against Aaj Tak concerning its broadcasts on May 7, 2025, titled “ऑपरेशन सिंदूर | ऐसे ध्वस्त हुआ जैश का आतंकी अड्डा” [*Operation Sindoor | How the Jaish Terrorist Base Was Destroyed*], and on May 9, 2025, titled “पाकिस्तान पर भारत का चौतरफा हमला, Lahore-Karachi में भारी नुकसान” [*All-Around Attack on Pakistan, Heavy Losses in Lahore-Karachi*]. The channel in its May 7 broadcast regarding “Operation Sindoor,” the channel used old footage from the Gaza-Israel conflict, falsely presenting it as real-time visuals of the Indian Armed Forces’ operation without any disclaimer. Similarly, the May 9 broadcast utilised a four-year-old video of Israel’s Iron Dome system, misleadingly claiming it to be recent footage from Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, related to India-Pakistan tensions.

These broadcasts constitute a severe violation of the NBDSA's Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards, specifically breaching the principles of impartiality and objectivity, neutrality, national security, and responsible reporting on crime and safeguards against glorifying violence.

1. Broadcast on May 7, 2025

Broadcast title: ऑपरेशन सिंदूर | ऐसे ध्वस्त हुआ जैश का आतंकी अड्डा [Operation Sindoor | How the Jaish Terrorist Base Was Destroyed]

- **Summary of broadcast misrepresenting archived or unrelated footage as real-time action during a sensitive geopolitical conflict**

On May 7, 2025, in the early hours, the Indian armed forces reportedly initiated ‘Operation Sindoor,’ targeting nine terrorist infrastructure sites within Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK). Following this reported action, visuals purportedly showing seven missiles being

launched from a distance rapidly circulated online. Numerous media outlets, journalists, and social media users shared these clips, asserting that they depicted the footage of ‘Operation Sindoor.’

This military action by India was reportedly a retaliatory response to the killing of 26 civilians in Pahalgam. The Ministry of Defence described the strikes as “measured and non-escalatory,” stating that no Pakistani military installations were targeted. According to a report by [The Hindu](#), the targeted terrorist camps were associated with various banned organisations, including Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizbul Mujahideen.

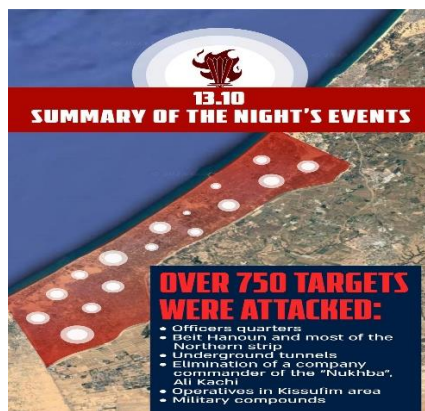
An Indian Express report ([May 7](#)) indicated that the nine sites India claimed to have struck were located in Bahawalpur and Muridke (Punjab, Pakistan) and in Muzaffarabad and Kotli in POK. Notably, the media outlet Aaj Tak, during a segment hosted by their senior journalist Anjana Om Kashyap, broadcasted visuals of missiles being fired. In their report, the outlet specifically counted seven strikes in the Bahawalpur city alone. Furthermore, the channel shared the same visuals on X (formerly Twitter) with the caption: “ऑपरेशन सिंदूर | ऐसे ध्वस्त हुआ जैश का आतंकी अड्डा” [“Operation Sindoor | How the Jaish Terrorist Base Was Destroyed”]. This broadcast and subsequent social media post presented the visuals as direct evidence of the Indian military operation against Jaish-e-Mohammed, as per the channel.



Link for the contentious programme: <https://x.com/aajtak/status/1919968044119654889>

However, independent fact-checking and official confirmations have since made it unequivocally clear that:

- Reverse image searches of keyframes from the broadcasted visuals unequivocally point to a news report published on the Sputnik Armenia website on October 13, 2023.
<https://am.sputniknews.ru/20231013/izrail-za-noch-nanesla-udary-po-750-obektam-v-sektore-gaza-video-67222774.html>
- The Sputnik Armenia news report utilised the very same video footage that was broadcasted by Aaj Tak as evidence of ‘Operation Sindoor.’
- The Sputnik report explicitly stated that the video depicted Israeli airstrikes on 750 military targets within the Gaza Strip.
- Further corroboration comes from a statement issued by the Israeli Air Force on October 13, 2023, which made the identical claim about the airstrikes in Gaza.
<https://www.facebook.com/IsraeliAirForce.EN/photos/the-iaf-struck-750-military-targets-overnight-including-underground-hamas-terror/724963543002777/>



Multiple other social media accounts had also shared the identical video on October 13, 2023. Links to these X posts are available:





Censored Men 
@CensoredMen

Follow



  Israel is currently carrying out a MASSIVE airstrike on Gaza.



5:08 am · 13 Oct 2023 · **821.1K** Views

 690

 3.1K

 8.1K

 237



Link: <https://x.com/CensoredMen/status/1712613757149462892>



People's Eye
@eye_peoples

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t.me/ConflictsObser...

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[# PalestineUnderAttack](#) [# palastine](#)
[# WestBank](#)



11:51 pm · 13 Oct 2023 · **200** Views

Link: https://x.com/eye_peoples/status/1712896351212917248



Younis Tirawi | يونس
@ytirawi

Follow ...

Gaza |

Intense bombings are now striking Gaza, causing significant tremors. In the past two hours alone, Israeli warplanes have claimed the lives of 40 Palestinians.



4:47 am · 13 Oct 2023 · 27.2K Views

26 277 255 9

Link: <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1712608422070194431>

- The same video resurfaced a few days later and was used by the media outlet Al Mayadeen in their video report on bombings in Gaza on October 23, 2023. Adding further clarity, Shayan Sardarizadeh, a senior journalist at BBC, pointed out on X on October 23rd that the visuals were “from 10 days ago,” further discrediting their connection to the May 7 event.



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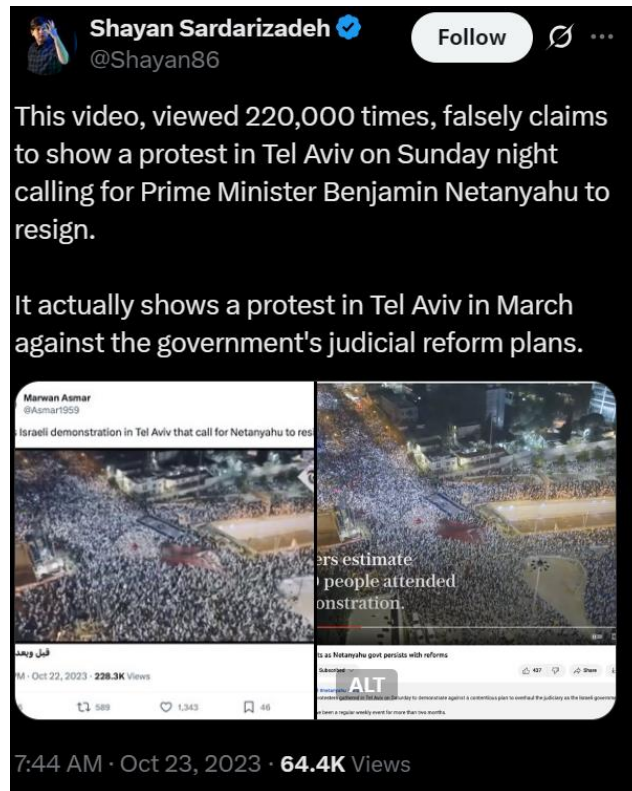


Share



8,383 views Oct 23, 2023 #طوفان_الأقصى #المقاومة_الفلسطينية #الميادين
#طوفان_الأقصى #المقاومة_الفلسطينية #الثورة_الكبرى #الميادين #فلسطين #طوفان_الأقصى

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nu8AncW2KI>



Link: <https://x.com/Shayan86/status/1716276980826464513>

The channel broadcasted old footage of Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, falsely presenting it as visuals of India's military operation against Pakistan-based terrorist organisations on May 7, 2025. These channels aired the unverified footage, and these false claims were amplified by senior journalists and disseminated to social media users, leading to the spread of misinformation regarding a sensitive issue.

Link of the social media posts and report "Operation Sindoor" may be viewed as follows:

1. India has launched [#OperationSindoor](#), a precise and restrained response to the barbaric [#PahalgamTerrorAttack](#) that claimed 26 lives, including one Nepali citizen. Focused strikes were carried out on nine [#terrorist](#) infrastructure sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, targeting the roots of cross-border terror planning. Importantly, no Pakistani military facilities were hit, reflecting India's calibrated and non-escalatory approach. This operation underscores India's resolve to hold perpetrators accountable while avoiding unnecessary provocation. A detailed briefing on the operation will follow later today.
https://x.com/SpokespersonMoD/status/1919857186655944825?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw

2. Op Sindoor most expansive attack launched by India in recent years

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/op-sindoor-most-expansive-attack-launched-by-india-in-recent-years-9986891/>

2. Broadcast on May 9, 2025

Broadcast title: पाकिस्तान पर भारत का चौतरफा हमला, Lahore-Karachi में भारी नुकसान [India's All-Around Attack on Pakistan, Heavy Losses in Lahore-Karachi]

- Summary of the broadcast visualised old video of Israel's air defence system

Similarly, on May 9, 2025, Aaj Tak, again aired a video during a show hosted by anchor Anjana Om Kashyap. During the broadcast, Kashyap claimed that the video depicted a recent Pakistani air attack being successfully thwarted in Jaisalmer, India. This same video was also featured in a news bulletin anchored by Shweta Singh on Aaj Tak, where it was similarly described as a Pakistani air attack in Jaisalmer that was successfully countered by the Indian air defense system.

In essence, several media channels, while reporting on the ongoing India-Pakistan armed conflict, broadcasted a video that was approximately four years old and falsely represented it as showing an Indian air defense system intercepting recent Pakistani air strikes near Jaisalmer. This misrepresentation aimed to provide visual confirmation of India's defensive capabilities during the heightened tensions



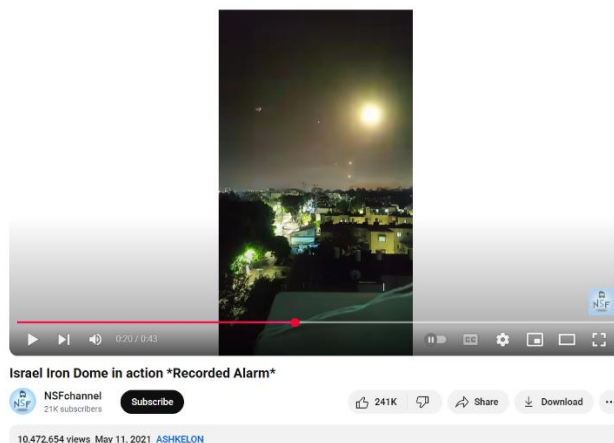
Link for the contentious programme:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_XVZy2KuFc&t=39s

However, independent fact-checking have since made it unequivocally clear that:

- The original video was uploaded to YouTube by a channel named NSF channel on May 11, 2021.
- The caption accompanying the original YouTube video explicitly states that it showcases Israel's air defense system, the Iron Dome, in action.
- While Alt News could not definitively verify the specific claim about the Iron Dome, it was conclusively established that the video was at least four years old at the time of the May 9, 2025 broadcast.
- The video has absolutely no connection whatsoever to the current conflict between India and Pakistan.
- Original video link can be found here:

<https://youtu.be/uTaEkAvfKMEtu.be/uTaEkAvfKME>



I. Section 2 – Principles of Self-Regulation

1. Impartiality, Objectivity, and Neutrality:

Accuracy is at the heart of the news television business. Viewers of 24-hour news channels expect speed, but it is the responsibility of TV news channels to keep accuracy, and balance, as precedence over speed...

- **Violation:**

In both segments, the channel prioritised sensationalism and speed over accuracy. The use of inaccurate and outdated footage as purported real-time visuals shows a reckless disregard for factual correctness, impartiality, and ethical broadcasting standards. No corrective statements or clarifications were aired, compounding the breach of accountability.

2. Reporting on crime and safeguards to ensure crime and violence are not glorified:

Channels should exercise restraint to ensure that any report or visuals broadcast do not induce, glorify, incite, or positively depict violence...

- **Violation:**

The use of footage depicting Israeli airstrikes, under the false pretense of being Indian military action, glorified violent retaliation and military aggression. Presenting this with

graphic visuals and triumphant tone amounts to the glamorisation of cross-border violence, which can mislead viewers and potentially incite emotional and nationalistic fervor.

- **Violation:**

The misrepresentation of a foreign missile defense system as Indian defense success glorified militaristic response, potentially desensitising viewers to the grave implications of armed conflict and misleadingly enhancing India's perceived defense capability through falsified visuals.

3. **Endangering national security:**

News channels will refrain from allowing broadcasts that... endanger lives and national security.

- **Violation:**

Both broadcasts contributed to the dissemination of false information during a highly volatile military situation between India and Pakistan. By misreporting the scale and locations of military operations, and falsely showing active air defense visuals, the channel could compromise operational confidentiality, mislead international observers, and inflame tensions, potentially undermining diplomatic efforts and national security interests.

III. **Violation of government advisories**

This coverage is also in direct violation of multiple advisories issued by government authorities including the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting:

- **Advisory on live/real-time coverage of defence operations (MIB Advisory dated April 25, 2025):**

All media channels, digital platforms and individuals are advised to refrain from live coverage or real-time reporting of defence operations and movement of security forces. Disclosure of such sensitive or source-based information may jeopardise operational effectiveness.

Aaj Tak, in its rush to report “Operation Sindoor,” irresponsibly broadcasted speculative and unverified visuals during prime-time programming, falsely portraying old footage from a different conflict zone as evidence of India's military strikes. This not only misled the public but also potentially compromised operational and national security.

The MIB advisory dated April 25, 2025 has been downloaded and annexed to the complaint as **Annexure A**.

- **Advisory to counter disinformation during sensitive times:**

Through social media platforms, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had urged citizens to, in sensitive times like these, be wary of disinformation being spread on social media. The advisory emphasised verifying any piece of news, image, or video before sharing or forwarding.

The broadcasts in question blatantly disregarded this advisory by airing unverified and repurposed footage — originally from Israel-Gaza conflict zones in 2021 and 2023 — and falsely presenting them as authentic visuals from an ongoing India-Pakistan conflict. This constitutes a serious

breach of ethical responsibility, especially during heightened national tension.
Link: http://x.com/MIB_India/status/1920890376367362362

IV. Consequences of your irresponsible coverage

The use of misleading and outdated footage by Aaj Tak during its May 7 and May 9, 2025 broadcasts constitutes a gross violation of journalistic ethics and regulatory standards. By airing old videos from unrelated conflicts — specifically, Israeli airstrikes on Gaza in 2023 and footage of the Iron Dome from 2021 — and falsely presenting them as real-time visuals of India's Operation Sindoor and alleged Pakistani attacks near Jaisalmer, Aaj Tak has misinformed the public on matters of national security and international conflict.

This misrepresentation is deeply troubling, especially given the heightened tensions between India and Pakistan during this period. Misreporting of this nature can escalate public panic, influence national sentiment based on falsehoods, and contribute to a climate of fear and hostility. That these broadcasts were led by senior journalists of national prominence further amplifies the damage, as viewers rely on their platforms for trusted and verified news.

As outlined in the NBDSA Code and upheld by journalistic ethics globally, the responsibility of the media is to inform the public with accuracy and fairness, especially during sensitive geopolitical moments. Aaj Tak's failure to verify the origins of the footage — when basic reverse image searches and public records clearly revealed the videos' actual provenance — represents a serious dereliction of this duty.

This reckless coverage has had tangible and damaging consequences:

- You have disseminated misinformation related to military operations, potentially destabilising regional diplomatic relations and compromising public understanding of national security events.
- You have undermined public trust in mainstream media, deepening skepticism towards legitimate news coverage and making space for further disinformation.
- You have trivialised real-time conflicts by co-opting unrelated global footage, thereby disrespecting the suffering of people impacted by those original conflicts.

V. Our demands

In light of the above, we demand that Aaj Tak take immediate corrective and restorative action as follows:

1. **Corrigendum and on-air correction:** Acknowledge and correct the false claims aired on May 7 and May 9, 2025, through an on-air correction with equal prominence and visibility as the original segments. These must be scheduled to attract maximum viewer attention, and not relegated to off-peak timeslots.
2. **Public apology to viewers and affected communities:** A formal, unconditional apology must be issued by the channel, both on-air and on all digital platforms, for the dissemination of false and misleading visuals and the resultant panic and misinformation caused.
3. **Immediate removal of the broadcast videos and related content:** The videos titled “ऑपरेशन सिंदूर | ऐसे ध्वस्त हुआ जैश का आतंकी अड्डा” and “पाकिस्तान पर भारत का चौतरफा हमला,

Lahore-Karachi में भारी नुकसान" must be permanently removed from all platforms, including YouTube and X, to prevent continued circulation of this misinformation.

This complaint is being formally lodged in accordance with the NBDSA's complaint mechanism and shall be escalated to the NBDSA should no corrective action be undertaken within the prescribed time. The fabrication and misrepresentation of sensitive military events is not only a journalistic failure but a moral one. Aaj Tak must accept responsibility and take urgent steps to undo the harm it has caused.

Yours sincerely,

Nandan Maluste, CJP President

Teesta Setalvad, CJP Secretary

Annexures:

Annexure A – MIB advisory dated April 25, 2025