

May 15, 2025

To

Mr. Nikhil Guliani

Compliance Officer NBDSA, NDTV

New Delhi Television Ltd. 402, Archana, B-Block Road, Greater Kailash I, New Delhi

Email: [legal@ndtv.com](mailto:legal@ndtv.com)

**Subject: Complaint regarding misleading broadcast of false video depicting Pakistani air attack in Jaisalmer**

Respected Sir,

We, at Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP), are writing to file a formal complaint against NDTV for its broadcast aired on May 8, 2025, titled: “*India-Pakistan Tension: पाकिस्तान के खिलाफ भारत का जवाबी हमला शुरू | India Attacks Pakistan Breaking*”

In this segment, your channel aired visuals allegedly showing a Pakistani air attack being foiled by Indian air defence systems in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. However, the visuals were misleading and factually incorrect. As verified by independent fact checkers, the video was not recent and had no connection to current events. It was sourced from a 2021 video — potentially from Israel’s Iron Dome air defence system, and had been uploaded by the YouTube channel *NSFchannel* on May 11, 2021.

This constitutes a gross violation of journalistic ethics, NBDSA’s Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards, and government advisories related to responsible reporting during national security crises.

Link for the contentious programme: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrhPLbZcwUQ>

### **I. Misrepresentation and misinformation**

In the segment aired on May 8, 2025, NDTV broadcast a video as part of its breaking news segment titled “*India-Pakistan Tension: पाकिस्तान के खिलाफ भारत का जवाबी हमला शुरू | India Attacks Pakistan Breaking*”. The footage, presented as visual evidence of a Pakistani air strike being foiled in Jaisalmer by Indian air defence systems, was in fact neither recent nor related to India or Pakistan.

Independent fact-checking portal Alt News investigated the video and conclusively established that it had no connection with the current conflict. Their investigation revealed the following:

- A reverse image search of multiple frames from the NDTV broadcast was conducted using Google's image search tools.
- This search led to an identical video uploaded on May 11, 2021, by a YouTube channel called NSFchannel.
- The video was titled and described as footage of Israel's Iron Dome air defence system in action.
- While Alt News noted it could not independently verify the location, it was able to confirm beyond doubt that the video was at least four years old and had no connection to the May 2025 India-Pakistan tensions, nor to any incident in Jaisalmer.
- The original video is still publicly available: [YouTube link – NSFchannel upload, May 11, 2021](#)



India-Pakistan Tension: पाकिस्तान के खिलाफ भारत का जवाबी हमला शुरू | India Attacks Pakistan Breaking



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Despite this, NDTV aired the video as breaking news footage, implicitly suggesting to viewers that Indian air defence forces had successfully repelled an actual Pakistani air attack. No disclaimers, source identification, or verification notes were presented either during or after the broadcast. The footage was shared with a tone of real-time urgency, further misleading the public into believing that an active military escalation was underway.

Link of the fact-checking report of Alt News: <https://www.altnews.in/aaj-tak-ndtv-india-tv-and-other-shared-four-years-old-footage-from-israel-as-recent-india-pakistan-tension-jaisalmer/>

This episode is a textbook case of disinformation — a viral, misleading video being platformed by a reputed news channel without basic due diligence, at a time of high national tension, thus potentially provoking panic, confusion, or even retaliation based on a fabricated premise.

## **II. Violations of NBDSA Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards**

The broadcast in question violates multiple core provisions of the NBDSA Code of Ethics, including:

### **Section 1 – Fundamental Principles**

Section 1 of the Code underscores the duty of professional electronic journalists to serve as trustees of public interest, and to “seek the truth and report it fairly with integrity and independence.” This includes:

- Ensuring the dissemination of verified and accurate information,
- Enabling the public to form their own opinions based on facts, and
- Being accountable to the citizenry by not misleading them, especially during sensitive national moments.

In this case, NDTV aired a video of unverified origin, falsely presented as live visuals of a Pakistani air attack foiled in Jaisalmer. In doing so:

- The channel compromised accuracy by failing to verify the authenticity or origin of the footage before airing it.
- It misled its audience, violating the ethical foundation of journalism to act in the public interest.
- It betrayed its role as a platform for truthful and balanced information.

This is a grave dereliction of professional responsibility, particularly in a conflict scenario where public perception can be easily influenced and misinformation can trigger mass fear or escalate geopolitical tensions.

### **Section 2 – Principles of Self-Regulation**

This section details specific editorial principles that broadcasters are required to follow. NDTV's coverage violates several of these principles, as elaborated below:

### **1. Impartiality and Objectivity in reporting**

- The video NDTV aired was factually incorrect, sourced from a 2021 upload likely showing Israel's Iron Dome, not Indian air defence.
- There was no disclaimer, verification, or attribution of source, misleading viewers into believing they were witnessing a real-time military event.
- The channel failed to uphold the minimum standard of journalistic verification, presenting speculation and falsity as fact.

### **2. Ensuring Neutrality**

- The tone and framing of the segment were unambiguously assertive, projecting the footage as verified evidence of military action.
- NDTV's approach lacked editorial neutrality, and did not include any counter-checks, disclaimers, or official verification — essential safeguards in high-stakes reporting.
- This breached the obligation to maintain editorial fairness and balance, especially in geopolitical contexts involving national security.

### **3. Reporting on Crime and Safeguards to Ensure Crime and Violence are Not Glorified**

- NDTV's segment framed the purported air defence action in dramatic and triumphalist terms, glorifying military confrontation through misleading visuals.
- The misrepresentation contributed to a heightened climate of aggression and jingoism, potentially desensitising viewers to the actual risks of conflict escalation.
- It also created a false sense of imminent war, which could trigger panic, hoarding, or unrest.

### **4. Endangering National Security**

- While no explicit classified information was shared, the implication of an ongoing air strike and defence response, if mistaken by external observers or adversaries, could have serious national security consequences.
- Broadcasting misleading footage during a live international standoff creates space for strategic miscalculations, which violates the spirit of this clause.

## **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.

NDTV's speculative broadcast gave the illusion of real-time reporting, falsely suggesting live conflict visuals.

*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, MIB had urged the citizens to, in sensitive times like these, be wary of disinformation being spread on social media. Always verify any piece of news, image, or video before you forward.

NDTV failed to verify or contextualise the footage, amplifying **dangerous disinformation** and failing in its public duty as a mainstream broadcaster.

Link- [http://x.com/MIB\\_India/status/1920890376367362362](http://x.com/MIB_India/status/1920890376367362362)

#### **IV. Consequences of irresponsible journalism**

The effects of such a broadcast are serious and damaging:

- You contributed to mass disinformation in an already anxious environment, risking public panic.
- You compromised your credibility and that of the media industry by broadcasting unverified, recycled content as fresh war footage.
- You undermined the sensitive nature of defence operations, potentially putting national security protocols and military discretion at risk.

In the context of the India-Pakistan relationship, such false and inflammatory content can worsen communal tensions, trigger social media misinformation spirals, and jeopardise diplomatic backchannels.

We are conscious and aware that NDTV is a responsible television channel and hence are bringing this to your attention with the sole intention of ensuring that verified telecasts alone are broadcast especially at a time of national crises. If at any point, in the flurry and hurry of

24X7 news coverage such an egregious error (as detailed below) does take place, surely the channel should remove this video and apologise to the viewing public?

## V. Our demands

In light of the above, we demand that NDTV immediately take the following actions:

1. **Corrigendum and on-air correction:** – NDTV must issue a public and prominent correction on-air, clearly acknowledging the use of false footage and misleading presentation. This must be aired with visibility equivalent to the original segment.
2. **Public apology**– NDTV must issue a formal apology to its viewers and the broader public for broadcasting unverified, misleading content during a time of heightened tension.
3. **Immediate removal of all related content**– The video and all related digital content must be permanently removed from YouTube and other platforms, and not be re-uploaded without clarification.

We are formally lodging this complaint in accordance with NBDSA complaint mechanisms. If appropriate corrective action is not taken within the prescribed timeframe, we will forward this complaint to NBDSA for further adjudication. We hope NDTV recognises the seriousness of the issue and undertakes necessary editorial and ethical review.

Yours sincerely,

Nandan Maluste, CJP President

Teesta Setalvad, CJP Secretary

## Annexures:

Annexure A- MIB advisory dated April 25, 2025