

News

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Z NEWS

TIMES NOW
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BY NBDSA ABOUT BROADCASTS THAT PURPORT TO BE
ABOUT "FOOD JIHAD" AND "THOOK JIHAD."**

It ruled that the term "jihad" should not be used carelessly and advised the channels to follow current guidelines for truthfulness and social harmony.

Zed News, Times Now Navbharat, News18, and NBDSA

Recently, the News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority (NBDSA) issued a number of directives warning television news outlets not to use the term "jihad" while covering individual criminal accusations.

In response to allegations that some news programs broadcast by Zee News, Times Now Navbharat, News18 India, and NDTV India utilized terms like "food jihad," "thook jihad," and "QR code jihad" in their reporting, NBDSA Chairperson Justice AK Sikri rendered decisions.

Advocates Utkarsh Mishra, Indrajeet Ghorpade, and Matin Mujawar filed the complaints.

Mishra, who collaborated with the Institute of Perception Studies, claims that they discovered up to 465 broadcasts on various channels endorsing these beliefs.

The programs in question dealt with specific occurrences, such as claims of food contamination, food contamination, restaurant owner identity fraud, and a QR code contribution appeal after Sambhal violence.

Without providing evidence, the complaint argued in each instance that the phrase "jihad" gave individual acts a collective flavor.

The complaints claimed that the Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards had been broken, including rules about accuracy, impartiality, peace within the community, and avoiding content that can incite conflict or single out a certain group.

The NBDSA noticed a recurrent trend in television reporting and said,

The NBDSA stated that it has been notified on multiple occasions over the years about the usage of the word "jihad" by different media outlets when covering matters concerning a particular group.

A broadcast on an incident in Kanpur where a restaurant owner was accused of supplying non-vegetarian food in a vegetarian establishment while purportedly hiding his identity was scrutinized by the NBDSA in one of the Zee News cases.

Tickers referring to "food jihad" were shown on the show, which also asked whether the

conduct was part of a wider pattern.

NBDSA ruled that reporting on the purported incident was acceptable after examining the material. The argument, however, stemmed from the fact that it was described as a type of "**jihad**" without any evidence connecting it to any organized or ideological goal.

According to the NBDSA, using such a strong term to refer to a single accusation runs the risk of giving it a more widespread community "**flavour**".

"It was improper to interpret the isolated and stray incidence as a form of jihad without any supporting information... the aforementioned act of an individual should not have been generalized and presented as 'jihad' without any credible proof or material to support the same... In order to avoid creating communal discord, the broadcaster should be cautious when giving such instances a more general communal flavor and refrain from drawing judgments without any supporting evidence, according to NBDSA.

It warned Zee News against this kind of framing in its ruling dated February 17 and ordered that the offensive content be changed or taken down within seven days.

In a another order pertaining to a Zee News program called "Sambhal Hinsa ke baad QR Code Jihaad," NBDSA investigated coverage of a person who purportedly pretended to be a journalist and requested money via a QR code following violence in the Sambhal district. The program was referred to as "QR Code Jihad" in the broadcast.

NBDSA noted that factual reporting was warranted and that the incident was a matter of public interest. But it ruled that there was no justification for using the word "jihad" in that situation.

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There was no justification for using the word "**Jihad**" ***to describe the event. According to NBDSA, there must be compelling reasons for using the term "Jihad"*** because it has certain meanings and implications and should not be used carelessly.

Zee News had maintained that political personalities have used the phrase and that it was a

component of public debate.

But according to the NBDSA, no such attribution was given during the broadcast. The channel was warned and instructed to take down the offensive content.

The show had called reported instances of people spitting in food "thook jihad" in a different complaint against Times Now Navbharat.

After receiving the complaint, the broadcaster notified NBDSA that the term had been used once and that the broadcast had been taken down.

In light of this, NBDSA chose not to investigate the content any further and cautioned the channel to be careful going forward.

After examining other broadcasts that were shown to it by news outlets such as Zee Uttar Pradesh, Zee Bharat, News18 India, and NDTV India, NBDSA discovered a pattern of the term "jihad" being used often in reports about a certain population.

Given the growing use of such language, NBDSA believed it was necessary to establish "Guidelines in respect of the usage of the term jihad," which members must keep in mind when publishing or broadcasting any news. According to NBDSA, "these guidelines would be in addition to the guidelines already issued and previous Orders passed by NBDSA on the subject."

Although the rules have not yet been released, NBDSA has repeatedly warned broadcasters about these issues without levying any fines.