

ADVISORY

May 20, 2019

Members and Editors of NBA

Re: Advisory regarding protocol to be followed by news channels when inviting retired officials from the armed forces in debates/ discussions on news channels

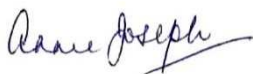
NBSA at its meeting held on 30.10.2018 had considered a complaint wherein it was pointed out that several news channels invited retired members of the armed forces to participate in the panel debates on their channels; that when they do so, the channels do not distinguish between serving members of the armed forces from the retired defence service personnel; that all such participants, whether serving or retired, are described by their rank without using suffix '(Retd)' or '(Retired)' in respect of the retired defence service personnel. The complainant also stated that the news channels have been showing photos of retired defence service personnel in uniform. According to the complainant, these were objectionable practices.

Having considered the complaint, it was decided by NBSA to address a letter to the Army, Air Force and Navy to ascertain the proper protocol in regard to such matters so that the broadcasters could be informed accordingly.

Based on the response received from the three services the following Advisory is issued in regard to the protocol to be followed by news channels, while inviting retired defence personnel for debates/discussions:

- (i) When displaying the name of the retired defence officer, add the word "(Retd)" at the end of the name and decorations, if any.
- (ii) If the news channels intend to show the photographs of retired defence personnel participating in debates/discussions, their photographs in uniform taken while in service, shall not be used.
- (iii) As retired defence personnel are permitted to wear their uniforms only on certain specified special occasions, they shall not be permitted to appear in their uniforms, during the debates/programmes on news channels.

Kindly take a note of the above protocol, which the broadcasters are to follow while inviting defence service personnel in debates /discussions etc. and circulate it all concerned in the editorial for compliance.



Annie Joseph
For and on behalf of the
News Broadcasting Standards Authority

CC: Legal Heads of NBA

PS: The response received from the three services in this regard is given below:

Response received from the three services to the NBSA Communication:

1. ARMY

(a) **“Distinguishing between Serving and Retired Service Personnel.** As per the policy on the subject in respect of retired service personnel, the word **"Retd"** will be written at the end of the name and decoration, if any.

(b) **Photographs of retired personnel in uniform.** The occasions on which the retired personnel may wear uniform are special occasions such as when attending ceremonial parades and entertainments of military nature, and on other occasions when the wearing of uniform would appear appropriate. **The media may therefore be advised that retired army personnel participating in debates not be depicted by their photograph in uniform taken while in service”.**

2. AIR FORCE:

(a) **“Distinguishing between Serving and Retired Service Personnel.** As per the policy on the subject in respect of retired service personnel, the word **“Retired”** be suffixed at the end of the name and decoration (if any).

(b) **Photographs of Retired Personnel in Uniform.** As per the existing Air Force regulations, retired officers are permitted to wear uniform during certain functions only.

It is recommended that media may be advised to refrain from displaying old photographs of retired personnel in uniform, taken while they were serving in the armed forces. This will prevent any incorrect impression in the minds of the viewer that the concerned person on the show is a serving member of the armed forces”.

3. NAVY:

“The Indian Navy follows a very strict protocol in so far as appearance of serving Officers on TV channels is concerned. **Only the Spokesperson (Navy) is authorized both by the Indian Navy & DPR/ Ministry of Defence to represent Indian Navy and provide clarifications on incidents/ events that merit attention.**

In so far retired Naval Officers are concerned, **it is recommended that the word ‘Retired’ be suffixed after their names. It is further clarified that TV channels contact these retired Officers on their own and Indian Navy is not in the loop at all”.**
