



rec'd 24/02/05

**Re- 10am SBS Urdu Language Radio Broadcast dated 20<sup>th</sup> February 2005**

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ we wish to lodge complaints about the contents of the above program.

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February was observed around the world as the 10<sup>th</sup> Day of Muharram (first month of the Muslim Calendar). On this day, Muslims observe the great martyrdom of Imam Husain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). Imam Husain (a.s.) was brutally slain in Kerbala in Iraq with members of his family by the tyrannical and corrupt caliph Yazid son of Muwaiya some 13 hundred years ago.

Imam Husain (a.s) stood against an evil, corrupt, morally bankrupt ruler and stood for truth, fairness & justice.

**A significant section of the Muslim community around the world observes this day with sadness and grief. This day is commemorated in a very somber mood by Muslims, and they refrain from any acts of entertainment on this day.**

**Complaint 1- Musical Songs played on SBS.**

We were very disappointed to hear that music was played on this day during the program.

In some countries such as Pakistan no music is played on TV or Radio stations.

Historically SBS Urdu Radio has always observed this protocol.

**Complaint 2 --- Biased Speech**

The speaker on the radio \_\_\_\_\_ made a very scant reference to the Martyrdom of Imam Hussain (a.s.) and trivialized the whole event. He emphasized other events that took place on that date. The events he mentioned are not observed by Muslims and some of these events have been doctored in Islamic history to divert attention from the main events of Kerbala.

We would request SBS to allow speakers who are well versed in Islamic history & understand the importance of events that took place instead of those who give misinformation or create division in the society.

The members of this organization are very distressed at the lack of in-sensitivity and understanding shown by your program and request that you redress this by broadcasting an apology on the same Urdu program on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> and put appropriate procedures in place to avoid this from repeating.

We have requested our members not to individually email you of the complaint.

Yours sincerely

## Topic: Historically Important Events In The Month Of Moharram.

Translation of the talk by \_\_\_\_\_

### Translation:

The listeners are aware that this month is the month of Moharram. Historically this month is of great importance. On the first of this month Caliph Umer Farooq was martyred. And this is the same month when Imam Hussein (grandson of Prophet Mohammad) was also martyred on the 10<sup>th</sup> of this month. It is also called the Day of Ashura. The day of Ashura is of great significance and importance and a lot of great events took place on this day. Prophet Adam was born on this day i.e. human beings were created on this day. He was sent to the earth from paradise on this day i.e. 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram. His repentance was also accepted on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram. Prophet Noah and his faithful people with him in the ship were saved by God after the ship wreck on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram. Similarly Prophet Moses story of parting of the sea and crossing it with his people and getting saved by God whereas his enemies were drowned also happened on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram. There are other important incidences that also happened on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram. It is said that the Day of Judgement will also fall on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram. So the Day of Ashura i.e. 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram is of great importance. Where all these important incidences happened on the Day of Ashura the sad martyrdom of Imam Hussein also happened on this day. I want to make one thing clear that is usually done by people or in other words it is weakness in their faith. Some people take the 10<sup>th</sup> of moharram which is a great date as an unlucky date and they stop people from doing anything on this date saying the date is unlucky because Imam Hussein got martyred on this date. Please keep this in mind that people have to die or get martyred on some day. To say that because so n so has died on that day that day is unlucky is very wrong. In other sense, if some one dies on Friday and we start saying that Friday is unlucky, which is a day of great importance for Muslims and according to our belief anyone who dies on Friday all his sins are forgiven. So we might start taking an auspicious day as unlucky. Or if someone dies during the month of Fasting, according to our religion anyone who dies in the month of Ramadan will also be pardoned of all his sins. So we come to the conclusion that calling a day as unlucky just because someone has died on that day is wrong. Similarly the Prophet of Islam, Mohammad died on a Monday, if we start saying that Monday is an unlucky day because the Prophet died that day would be completely wrong. So the martyrdom of Imam Hussein that took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram, which is a great date, and consider it unlucky is absolutely wrong. There is no doubt that martyrdom of Imam Hussein and the way he was brutally killed, is a sad incidence and we feel extremely sad and sorry for the incidence. There is a lot that can be learnt from his martyrdom and we should look at that aspect of it, but we should not look at it as something unlucky. In any case, the 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram or Ashura is a great date. Prophet Mohammad noticed that the Jews used to fast on Ashura and he asked them why do you fast on this day, they replied because God saved Moses and his people on this date, so we celebrate the day and we keep a fast on this day. So the Prophet said we are very close to brother Moses we will also fast but be a little different to Jews. We will fast on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of Moharram and not on the 10<sup>th</sup> like Jews. So the day of Ashura is a great day but the incidence of martyrdom of Imam Hussein has its own importance. We say that the Martyrdom of

Imam Hussein because it took place on this date i.e. 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram, . it has increased its importance 10 times. Any person that dies on Friday, we say that person is so lucky he got Friday to die. Similarly when a person dies during Ramadan, we say he was lucky that he got to die in the sacred month of Ramadan. Similarly we say, Imam Hussein is very Lucky that he died on a very important date and God gave him Martyrdom on that important date of 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram. We talk a lot about the Martyrdom of Imam Hussein, I just want to say one thing, and that is He didn't bow down in front of an evil force. That is the lesson that he has left for us. He has taught us by his great sacrifice that Right should always be upheld. No matter how cruel your enemy is, don't be afraid to say the truth and fight for the truth. So the best struggle is to say the Right and truth in front of the cruel King. Imam Hussein did that. May God give us the understanding to understand the importance of Imam Hussein's Martyrdom and also to understand the reality of Ashura the 10<sup>th</sup> of Moharram.

14 March 2005

**POSTED**

Thank you for your correspondence of 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005 concerning your complaints at the Urdu Language program broadcast by SBS on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2005. The Audience Affairs Office has now finalised its investigation into the matter.

SBS regrets any offence to the Shia community which may have been caused by the content of the commentary by [redacted].

As a public broadcaster, SBS has a duty to provide a range of opinions to its audience. [redacted] is a published and respected religious scholar and the [redacted] in Sydney.

SBS appreciates that the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharram is an important day to all Muslims. SBS also appreciates that within Islam, there are various interpretations on how the day should be observed. On previous occasions, SBS has broadcast commentary from Shia scholars on this day. This year, a Sunni scholar was invited to present his view. In the previous week, on 13<sup>th</sup> January, a Shia scholar, [redacted], presented his view about the Martyrdom of Imam Hussein on the Urdu Language program.

The Urdu Language program is not a religious program. Its role is to service all Urdu speaking communities, a diverse group which encompasses many religions and nationalities. To reflect this, the Urdu Language program is required to broadcast a variety of material.

The music played on the program on the day under investigation, serviced the needs of another section of the Urdu Language program's audience: Urdu speakers who were celebrating the announcement of the resumption of bus services between Kashmir and Pakistan.

As Code 1 of the SBS Codes of Practice states:

*SBS believes that its audiences are best served by exposure to a wide range of cultures, values and perspectives. As a result, SBS's programming can be controversial and provocative and may at times be distasteful or offensive to some.*

SBS does try and handle the competing needs of its audience as sensitively as possible, and regrets incidences when, despite the best efforts of our broadcasters, the mix and diversity of a program may still be offensive to some sections of the audience.

I understand that shortly after the receipt of your complaint, you were contacted by the Acting Program Manager, [redacted] who offered an apology to your community. This apology was aired by SBS on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

If you consider this investigation to be inadequate you are entitled to take your concerns to the Australian Broadcasting Authority.

SBS appreciates hearing from its audience and is pleased of the opportunity to clarify its roles and duties.

Yours sincerely,



Sally Begbie  
**Audience Affairs Manager**

**Online Complaints Form****Subject:** Online Complaints Form

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**1. YOUR DETAILS**

NAME: HOME PHONE:  
ADDRESS: WORK PHONE:  
MOBILE PHONE:

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**2. WITH REFERENCE**

RADIO: Program/Language: Urdu  
Program Date: 20 Feb 2005  
Program Time: :  
CODES: 2. General Program Codes and Polices  
2.1 Prejudice, Racism and Discrimination

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**3. DETAILS OF YOUR COMPLAINT**

The program was on Sunday 20 February 2005 for the Ashura day program. I heard it on the website...the address for which is: <http://203.15.102.143:8080/ramgen/record/urdu.rm> The above program was deeply offensive to the Shia community and is a clear case of racial and religious bias against the Shias of the world not just Australians. The speaker seems to be ignorant and not in a position of a scholar whatsoever. A scholar talks with intellect and does not make rabble rousing comments such as the ones issued by [redacted] He is no one to talk about Ashura let alone Islam and his opinion was deeply hurtful and based on falsehood! How can a respected station like SBS radio air such programs??? Please refrain from such jaundiced speakers in future and issue a public apology on the radio and/or tv for the program. Sincerely yours,

Submitted: 23 February 2005 11:38



SBS Corporation - Australia's multicultural broadcaster

Audience Affairs Office

14 March 2005

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SBS regrets any offence to the Shia community which may have been caused by the content of the commentary by [REDACTED].

As a public broadcaster, SBS has a duty to provide a range of opinions to its audience. [REDACTED] is a published and respected religious scholar and the ... [REDACTED] in Sydney.

SBS appreciates that the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharram is an important day to all Muslims. SBS also appreciates that within Islam, there are various interpretations on how the day should be observed. On previous occasions, SBS has broadcast commentary from Shia scholars on this day. This year, a Sunni scholar was invited to present his view. In the previous week, on 13<sup>th</sup> January, a Shia scholar, [REDACTED], presented his view about the Martyrdom of Imam Hussein on the Urdu Language program.

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The SBS Acting Program Manager, [REDACTED] offered an apology to the Shia community. This apology was aired by SBS on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

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**Audience Affairs Manager**

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### 1. YOUR DETAILS

NAME:

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### 2. WITH REFERENCE

RADIO: Program/Language: Urdu  
Program Date: 20/02/2005  
Program Time: 10:15 AM

ONLINE: Online Location: SBS Urdu programme  
Content Nature: talk about the day of Ashura-Muharram which was controversial and prejudiced distorting the actual facts. He should come again and apologise for his comments. It is detrimental to the reputation of SBS, too  
Accessed Via: PC

CODES: 5. Community Information  
5.2 Radio Only

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### 3. DETAILS OF YOUR COMPLAINT

talk about the day of Ashura-Muharram which was controversial and prejudiced distorting the actual facts. He should come again and apologise for his comments. He is a biased man with no knowledge of Ashura and he is NOT a right person to give a talk. You should have called one of resident Maulanas for this. That was a blunder from Urdu programme director. This is detrimental to the reputation of SBS, too. So, my sincere advice to you that he should come again next Sunday and apologise and he should NOT be allowed to give a talk again on SBS as he is an able person.

Submitted: 21 February 2005 16:34

## Audience Affairs Office

14 March 2005

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SBS appreciates that the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharram is an important day to all Muslims. SBS also appreciates that within Islam, there are various interpretations on how the day should be observed. On previous occasions, SBS has broadcast commentary from Shia scholars on this day. This year, a Sunni scholar was invited to present his view. In the previous week, on 13<sup>th</sup> January, a Shia scholar, [redacted], presented his view about the Martyrdom of Imam Hussein on the Urdu Language program.

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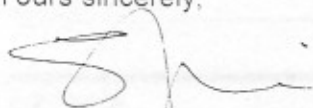
SBS does try and handle the competing needs of its audience as sensitively as possible, and regrets incidences when, despite the best efforts of our broadcasters, the mix and diversity of a program may still be offensive to some sections of the audience.

The SBS Acting Program Manager, [redacted] offered an apology to the Shia community. This apology was aired by SBS on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

If you consider this investigation to be inadequate you are entitled to take your concerns to the Australian Broadcasting Authority.

SBS appreciates hearing from its audience and is pleased of the opportunity to clarify its roles and duties.

Yours sincerely,

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Sally Begbie  
**Audience Affairs Manager**

## Online Complaints Form

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**Subject:** Online Complaints Form

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### 2. WITH REFERENCE

RADIO: Program/Language: Urdu  
Program Date: 20/02/2005  
Program Time: 10:00  
CODES: 2. General Program Codes and Polices  
2.5 Religions

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### 3. DETAILS OF YOUR COMPLAINT

This program is very good but last Sunday's broadcast was very bias. Extreme whabism was apparent and instead of bringing communities together it was with the intention to create divisions. I am a shia and am hurt by this broadcast and Shia's accross Australia are angry with this broadcast, we feel that there should be a formal appology from SBS. Thanks ☺

Submitted: 21 February 2005 22:54

Audience Affairs Office

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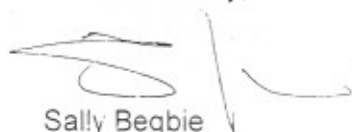
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**Audience Affairs Manager**

**Online Complaints Form**

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**Subject:** Online Complaints Form

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MOBILE PHONE:

**2. WITH REFERENCE**

RADIO: Program/Language: Urdu  
Program Date: 20/2/2005  
Program Time: 10:00 AM

CODES:

**3. DETAILS OF YOUR COMPLAINT**

Ashura day is a day when a significant section of the Muslim community commemorate the tragedy of Imam Husain in Kerbala. SBS should not have played songs on that date and the speaker was very biased towards the tragedy. The tragedy of Kerbela surpasses all events mentioned by him. His speech reflects the extreme salafi (wahabi) school of thought and should not be allowed on SBS

Submitted: 21 February 2005 13:39



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14 March 2005

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Sally Begbie  
Audience Affairs Manager

DATE: 1/11/01  
TIME: 10:00  
PHONE: 02 9230 3000