

News from SAT-7  
Summer 2024

# INSIGHT



## SHARING THE GOSPEL

Life and hope in Christ

Overcoming barriers | Transformed  
lives | The Partnership Gathering

**CHRISTIAN MEDIA  
FOR THE MIDDLE EAST  
AND NORTH AFRICA**



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Front cover image: Marianne Awaraji, presenter of the new SAT-7 ARABIC live program *My Life Journey* (see pages 6-7)

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# MAKING CHRIST KNOWN

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul says that the Gospel of Jesus Christ “is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes” (1:16). It declares the reign of Christ as Lord over all things and the liberation from evil that He has provided through His death and resurrection.

SAT-7’s presenters and Viewer Support teams hear day after day how God graciously transforms lives through the Gospel message. One example is Leyla from Iran, who described what a difference becoming a believer had made to her: “Before I came to faith, I saw myself as a defeated person with no hope, and I often thought about ending it all. Not anymore. Now I see myself as a well-loved daughter of God, and this is so wonderful.”

Sharing this message with the people of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is part of SAT-7’s calling from God and at the core of what we do. Last month, Archbishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church, London, and Chair of the SAT-7 International Council visited our International Office to mark our ministry’s 28th anniversary. I was moved and humbled as His Eminence encouraged us all in our work.

"SAT-7 is not an institution, a company, or an organization. It is a ministry, a ministry that ministers to people. And its message is not like any other; it is a message of the light and the love of God that extends into the world."

We want to give everyone in the region – from every country and language group, men and women, rich and poor – an opportunity to hear the biblical Gospel and to make an informed response to it. We long to see the Church growing in numbers and depth and to encourage and equip it in its faithful and brave witness for Christ.

In this edition of *Insight*, you can read about the challenges faced by Christians in the MENA as they seek to make Christ known among their neighbors. You will also learn about the many ways in which SAT-7 is helping churches make the Gospel available to our viewers and enable them to engage with it. And you can find more stories of people transformed by this life-giving message.

The Good News of Jesus relates to the whole of life, so SAT-7 seeks to contribute to the good of culture and society and the responsible stewarding of the earth’s resources. You can read about some of our key projects of this kind. Also included is a report on our annual Partnership Gathering, when our supporters, co-workers, and staff came together in Cyprus to celebrate God’s faithfulness to SAT-7 and make plans for the future.

Thank you so much for your prayers and support for SAT-7. We pray that you will continually find joy in the Gospel of Christ.

Rita El-Mounayer  
SAT-7 CEO



# SHARING THE GOSPEL

## “WITH GENTLENESS AND RESPECT”

SAT-7 wants people across the MENA to have the opportunity to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ in their language and make their response to it. We are “not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16). We also affirm Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that everyone has the right to “freedom of thought, conscience, and religion,” including the “freedom to change his religion or belief.”

SAT-7 is reaching people with the Gospel message in a region where millions have never heard it. We use the powerful instruments of satellite television and digital media to overcome barriers of illiteracy, accessibility, and restrictions on religious freedom. Our programs are made in the main languages of the MENA and produced for people of different ages, backgrounds, and stages of faith to make our output accessible and relevant for as many people as possible.

We reach large audiences across a range of platforms but also engage individuals in one-to-one follow-up

conversations and activities to support and encourage them as they grow in their understanding of the Christian faith.

As we share the hope that we have in Jesus, we are mindful of 1 Peter’s exhortation to “do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). Our content is produced by and for the people of the MENA and is therefore sensitive to the region’s cultures and careful not to attack other religions.

In the following pages, you can read about the obstacles faced by Christians in the MENA as they seek to share the Gospel with their neighbors. You will also learn more about the various ways in which SAT-7 is supporting them in this task through different kinds of Gospel programming. And you can listen in to some of the many testimonies that SAT-7 receives from viewers whose lives have been transformed by the Good News.

We praise God that SAT-7 is making His love visible in this challenging region.



On the set of *It Is Important to Be Christian*



Young Christians praying in a damaged church in Zabadani, Syria

# LIMITED ACCESS TO THE GOSPEL

The churches of the MENA are faithful and courageous, and they long to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with their friends and neighbors. The region is home to approximately 678 million people. The vast majority of these are not Christians. Many of them face acute social and political difficulties, from grinding poverty to brutal violence to forced displacement, and they are crying out for a message of hope and peace. And by no means are all of them resistant to the Gospel; many have simply not heard it.

## General restrictions

But in many places, the churches have to surmount numerous difficulties in communicating the Good News. For example, they lack the numbers to reach out personally to much of the surrounding population. The Christian presence in the region has diminished to only around 4%, and in some places, it is well under 1%. Some countries restrict or prohibit Christian worship and witness; the distribution of Bibles and Christian resources is discouraged in many places, and most media are subject to state censorship. These difficulties can affect churches of all kinds, from traditional denominations with long-standing buildings to underground fellowships meeting in homes.

Even if people can hear the message, many will struggle to engage with it and make an informed response. They may be unable to attend public worship, have no one to answer their questions, and may be under pressure from their families or communities to remain within their current faith community. Their perceptions may also be distorted by the lack of contextually authentic expressions of Christian faith in some parts of the MENA.

## Specific challenges

Specific conditions and recent developments (at the time of writing) in various places are further restricting the freedom of local Christian communities to share the Gospel.

Thus, in the Persian World, the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 increased the already severe dangers faced by the endangered Christian minority and drove them even further

underground to minimize the risk of attacks.<sup>1</sup> Arman, an Afghan Christian who had been dismissed from his job, told SAT-7, “An atmosphere of fear and intimidation rules society. Every moment, we live with the possibility of physical violence, arrest, humiliating and insulting treatment, and even summary executions.”

In Iran, officially recognized churches are effectively forbidden to use the Farsi language in their services, hindering them from sharing their message outside their communities. Members of unrecognized churches who speak about their faith are often arrested. Protests in 2022 over the death of Mahsa Amini in police custody for incorrectly wearing the hijab contributed to a sharp deterioration in religious freedom conditions,<sup>2</sup> while changes to the penal code in 2021 further restricted Christians’ liberty to pass on the Good News.<sup>3</sup>

In Türkiye, the churches are sometimes unable freely to manage their internal affairs, to open places of worship, or to train their pastors. They also cannot always choose their own leaders, and new restrictions have recently been introduced on the procedures for electing the leadership of minority religious groups. Meanwhile, intimidation, violence, and attacks on religious sites continue sporadically.<sup>4</sup> There are also few opportunities for Christian education in the country.

In some parts of the Arab World, Christians suffer violent attacks by family or wider society that hinder their public witness to Christ. Legal penalties and limitations may also be imposed. For instance, various Christians in Algeria have been convicted on faith-related charges and sentenced to up to five years imprisonment; in Saudi Arabia, no church buildings are allowed; and elsewhere, these are subject to stricter regulations than those for the majority faith. Since the outbreak of war in the Holy Land, the future of the oldest Christian community in the world has been in jeopardy.

The churches of the MENA will benefit from a means of sharing the Gospel that helps them to overcome these multiple barriers. Please turn the page to see how SAT-7 is addressing this need.

“  
I can’t go to a church freely; I can’t even freely say that I am a Christian. It is all secret. I can’t walk easily in my path with Christ.  
A viewer from Iran

<sup>1</sup> “Afghanistan”, Open Doors UK, <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/world-watch-list/afghanistan/?ref=wwmap> (accessed 10 April 2024).

<sup>2</sup> “Iran”, 2023 USCIRF Annual Report, <https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2023-05/Iran.pdf> (accessed 10 April 2024).

<sup>3</sup> “Iran”, Middle East Concern, <https://www.meconcern.org/countries/iran/> (accessed 10 April 2024).

<sup>4</sup> “Turkey”, 2023 USCIRF Annual Report, <https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2023-05/Turkey.pdf> (accessed 10 April 2024); <https://www.gerceknews.com/article/turkeys-new-minority-foundations-regulation-perpetuates-state-control-215926> (no longer accessible).

# HOW SAT-7 SHARES THE GOSPEL

More than 40 years ago in the Middle East, Dr Terence Ascott saw a family living on the edge of destitution but huddled around a small television screen. As he reflected on this experience, he realized that television would be an excellent medium for sharing the Gospel with families who might otherwise never have the opportunity to hear it.

SAT-7's ability to reach people's homes and hearts through satellite television and digital media has enabled it to introduce people across the MENA to the Gospel for nearly three decades, and countless lives have been impacted. Our team, made up almost entirely of people from the region, presents the Gospel in a variety of ways.

## Teaching and talk shows

SAT-7's teaching and talk shows are a great way for viewers to encounter the Good News and begin a transformative discipleship journey.

These programs not only introduce them to the Gospel – many for the first time – but help seekers and new believers understand all of Christianity's central themes, helping them on the way to a saving and mature faith. Regardless of subject matter and target audience, all our programs aim to be faithful to the Bible, engaging, and encouraging.

*Question Mark* is a program that allows Persian speakers to have their most pressing questions about faith, God, the Church, and Christianity answered. Using the questions as a springboard, presenter Sally Momtazi, with the help of Christian guests, strengthens the faith of new believers like Matin, who said, "I thank God for your teaching, which is feeding me and helping me to grow."

*Principles of Faith*, meanwhile, takes viewers deeper into the Christian faith. The program "teaches [viewers] about the Christian faith and how it can guide you in your life," says Panayiotis Keenan, SAT-7 PARS Executive Director. "We bring together trusted pastors and Bible teachers to explore different topics in-depth, and guests are encouraged to call in with questions or share their testimonies."

SAT-7 ARABIC program *It Is Important to Be Christian* performs a similar function for men and women in the Arabic-speaking world. The program explores how the message of Jesus impacts the wider world as well as individual lives. It is especially helpful for young adults and teens attracted to atheism.

"I came across the program on SAT-7 nearly two months ago," said Seleem, a man from Jordan. "I loved your deep explanation and thorough dissection of the Christian faith.

I would like to thank you for your excellent way of conveying new concepts and teaching us about how to practice our faith... I hope words haven't failed me in conveying the breadth of my love and gratitude for you and your program."

On SAT-7 TÜRK, *Essence of the Gospel* is a popular Bible-based talk show designed to impact viewers' hearts as well as their minds. The presenter, Pastor Cem Ercin, believes that "people are hungry for the Word of God in Türkiye, but they do not know what they are looking for."

Pastor Cem is also involved in *Practising Discipleship*, a new program he co-hosts with Serli Balık. The program leads viewers to the vital truth that Christianity is a life to be lived, not simply a theory to be understood. In a country where Christianity is widely seen as alien and incoherent, this is important for Turkish viewers to hear. One viewer, named Serhat, has clearly understood the heart of the program. "Please pray for our church," he said, "and for me to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to serve."

## Prayer and praise programs

Prayer and worship programs play an important role in sharing the Gospel with SAT-7 viewers, who hear about the truth of Jesus through praise songs and see the goodness of God as they converse with Him and see their prayers answered. In a world where bad news often makes the headlines, prayerful reflections on the Good News of Jesus can change someone's day, or even their life.

On SAT-7 PARS, *Heavenly Worship* brings high-quality sung worship into the homes and hearts of adults all over Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. Themes such as hope, faith, and family are chosen by the worship leaders, as they feel led by the Holy Spirit, and are explored through prayer and Bible passages as well as songs.

SAT-7 KIDS program *My Jesus* is designed specifically for young Arab viewers. Produced on a beautiful boat-shaped set, the program celebrates Jesus Christ through music while educating viewers about His characteristics. Worship teams from churches across Egypt contributed to the first series, which started broadcasting in May 2024.

The new SAT-7 ARABIC live program *My Life Journey* shares the transformative power of the Gospel through worship music and moving testimonies from Arabic Christian influencers with thousands of social media followers. Guests share stories of trials they have experienced and how God's grace helped them. Young viewers have been responding positively in large numbers on social media. Episode titles from the **first series**



include “From the Darkness of Atheism to a Practical Faith” and “From the World of Sin to New Birth.”

SAT-7 TÜRK program *Power of Prayer* welcomes anyone in need of prayer. A biblical theme anchors each episode as prayer requests and remarkable answers to prayer flood in from viewers. Many non-Christians get involved, and some have come to Christ as a result. “Your programs have contributed a lot to my coming to faith in Jesus Christ,” one viewer said. “Thank you, and may the Lord be with you.”

### Alternative programs for young people

With social media, streaming platforms, and video games constantly fighting for the attention of young people, dynamic and attractive Gospel presentations have never been more important. Our channels are using increasingly inventive methods to present the Gospel in an exciting and engaging manner.

*Sweet Anecdotes* is a series of short animations on SAT-7 PARS that bring the stories of Jesus to life in chronological order. The superstars of the program are a team of hand-drawn paper puppets! Director Mironas Leys explained the necessity of programs like this: “In Iran, children do not learn about Jesus or Christianity; there are very few sources of information. But through this program, we can teach children from an early age about Jesus. Even very young children can enjoy this kind of animation.”

On SAT-7 ARABIC, *Behind the Door* also exists to teach children about Jesus, but through exciting games and puzzles. Four young presenters guide viewers through an exciting array of segments, incorporating music, word games, Bible stories, and live phone-ins. Suzy, a viewer from Egypt, said, “Thank you so much for always being here for us and for leading us to the right path. Your presence in our lives makes a big difference.”

*Quality Time* is another Arabic program that unpacks the Gospel for a young audience. This dynamic show, now in its second season, was created to help teenagers step back from the noisy world of social media and focus on the character of God. Episodes include pre-recorded drama segments, group discussions among hosts and teenage guests, plus songs played by a live band. The latest series uses biblical wisdom to address challenging issues such as “The Heart vs. the Mind” and “God’s Will vs. My Freedom.”

- ① *Principles of Faith* explains Christianity to Persian-speaking viewers
- ② *Behind the Door* engages children with the Good News of Jesus
- ③ Celebrating Christ through music on *My Jesus*
- ④ Encouraging answers to prayer are shared on *Power of Prayer*
- ⑤ *Quality Time* engages teenagers in discussion on Christian themes
- ⑥ A biblical animation on *Sweet Anecdotes*
- ⑦ *It Is Important to Be Christian* explores the Christian message

# VIEWER SUPPORT

For SAT-7, what happens off-screen is just as important as what happens on it. A core part of our ministry to viewers across the MENA is a commitment to supporting them through dedicated support teams who offer prayer, advice, and counseling.

Each of our satellite TV channels has a Viewer Support Team made up of Persian, Turkish, or Arab believers who are ready to receive our viewers' comments, concerns, questions, prayer requests, and testimonies. They can be contacted through phone calls during live programs, comments on our social media pages, and direct messages through apps like Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram.

As our team members listen to viewers, they build a strong foundation of trust. Then, they offer an appropriate form of loving support, whether prayer, counseling, daily encouragement, Christian resources, practical advice, or signposting to other services.

In 2023 alone:

Our teams took part in **103,345** conversations with viewers in the MENA



and their offers of counseling sessions or teaching resources were accepted **8,604** times.



Some viewers contact us, desperate to know more about Jesus. Others like Sonya, a teenage girl from Egypt, contact us to share their burdens and encounter God in the process.

"I lock myself up in my room to avoid [my parents'] harsh words," she said in one of her first messages. "I pray to God, but I feel He does not want to hear from me, nor does He want me! I have lost all self-confidence."

After much discussion and prayer, Sonya committed to following Jesus and joined SAT-7 ARABIC's Daily Bread social media discipleship group.

"I'm grateful for you and for your love," Sonya said. "I thank God for leading me to you."





**SAT-7 PLUS**  
had **478,984**  
unique users \*



**SAT-7's Viewer Support**  
teams held **26,422**  
conversations with viewers \*



**SAT-7's YouTube videos**  
had **6,520,533**  
views \*

\* All statistics cover the period January 1 to March 31, 2024.



# TRANSFORMED BY THE GOSPEL

SAT-7 has the privilege of communicating the Gospel in a variety of ways and hearing of the changes it has brought to the hearts and lives of viewers. Every week, we receive wonderful testimonies of transformation; here are just a few.

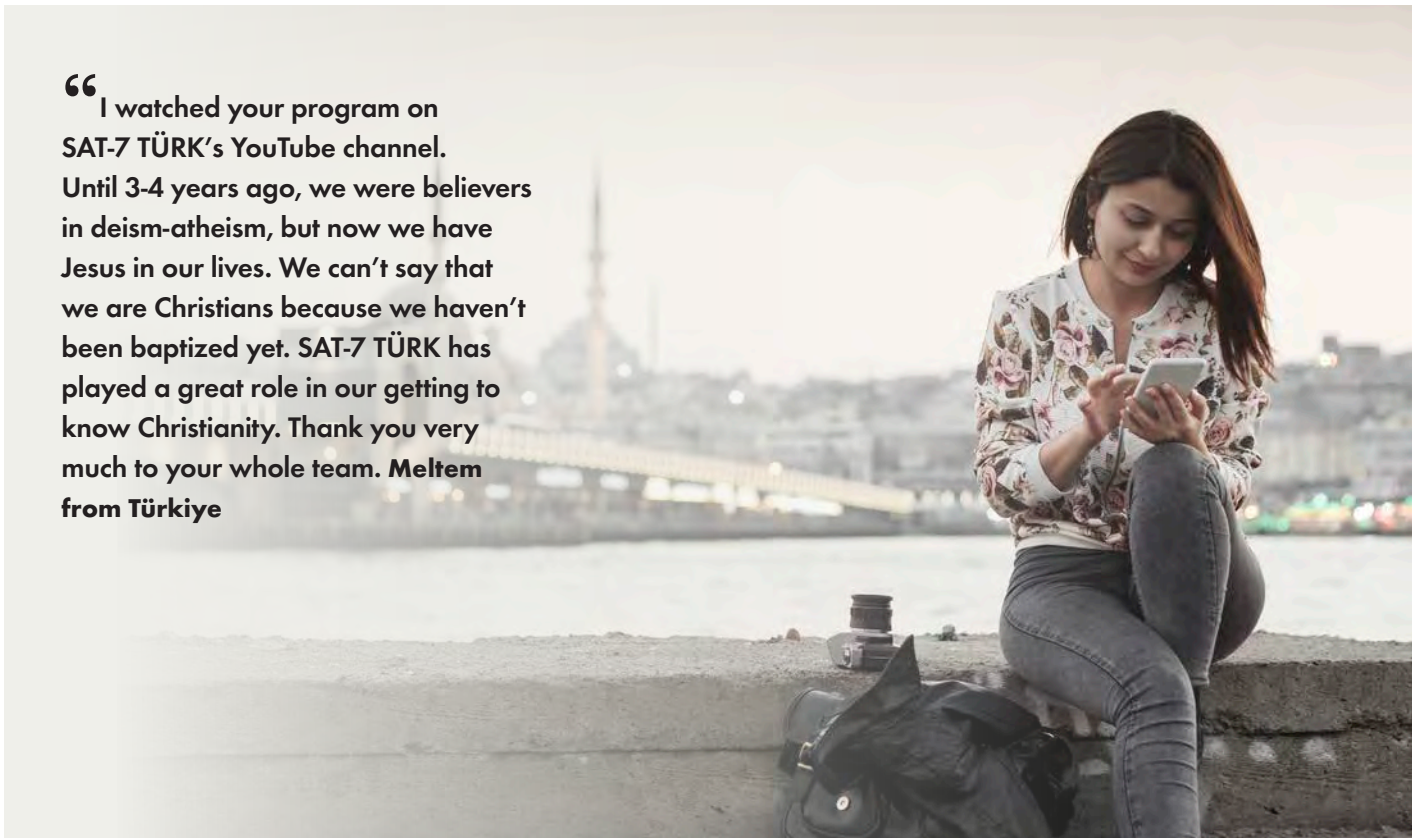
## SAT-7 PROGRAMS

Some of our viewers hear the Gospel for the first time through one of SAT-7's programs. Some follow our channels for a long time as they journey towards Jesus, while others unexpectedly encounter God's love as they stumble upon one of our programs.



**“I was born into a different background and have had strong doubts about it for the last five years. I can't deny how deeply SAT-7 impacted me, and I am considering committing myself to Christ. I've come to love Christianity and had a dream that I was at a church praying and was very happy. Hadi from Morocco**

**“I watched your program on SAT-7 TÜRK's YouTube channel. Until 3-4 years ago, we were believers in deism-atheism, but now we have Jesus in our lives. We can't say that we are Christians because we haven't been baptized yet. SAT-7 TÜRK has played a great role in our getting to know Christianity. Thank you very much to your whole team. Meltem from Türkiye**



**“I have recently started watching your programs, and I thank God that through you, dear friends, we are able to hear God's word in our own homes. This is the kindness of the Lord that is being shown to us. Armita from Iran**



**“Thank you for the time you set aside for us in the [online teaching] sessions. Using the things I learned from you, I gave the Good News to my friend, who came to faith. I had prayed a lot for her and thank God she believes. I have referred her to the channel, and she has joined the teaching sessions so that she can grow in her understanding of the Christian faith. Feriyal from Iran**

## OUR VIEWERS

Then there are the brave believers who have been sharing the Gospel in their own communities and want to share their moving stories with SAT-7.

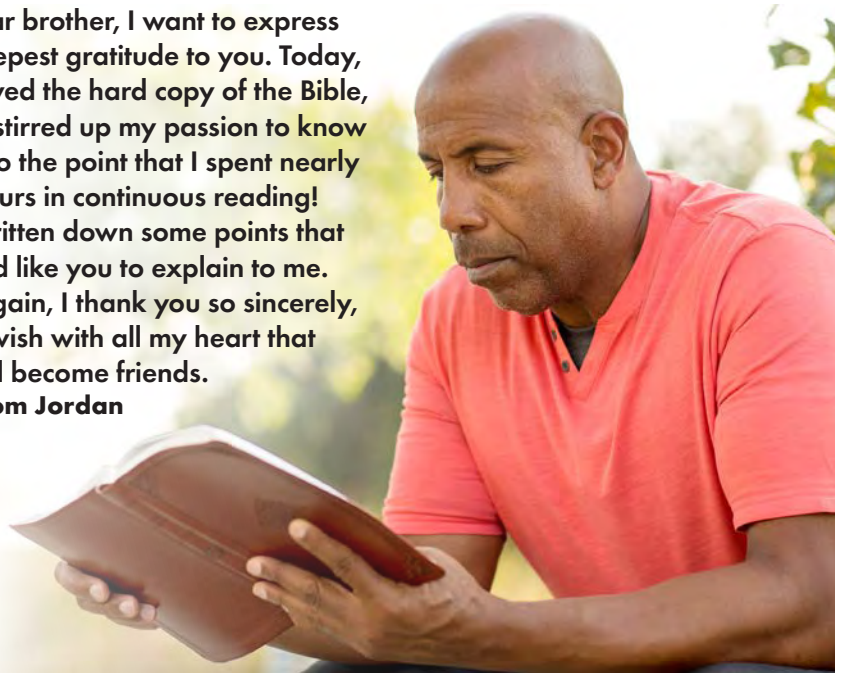
**“I ask you to pray for my friend Omar. He is not a believer. May our God, who knows him in every way, touch his heart and give him wisdom to know the truth of eternal life. Cafer from Türkiye**

## VIEWER SUPPORT TEAMS

Others hear the Good News from our Viewer Support Teams, who are always ready to talk about Jesus' mission and message.

When Jad contacted the SAT-7 ARABIC team, they perceived deep sadness in his heart, as if he were hopeless and helpless, and they started building a friendship with him. They explained the message of the Bible, told him stories from the New Testament, and shared various resources with him. He seemed hungry to know more, kept asking questions, and finally expressed his wish to have a physical Bible.

**“Dear brother, I want to express my deepest gratitude to you. Today, I received the hard copy of the Bible, and it stirred up my passion to know more to the point that I spent nearly five hours in continuous reading! I've written down some points that I would like you to explain to me. And again, I thank you so sincerely, and I wish with all my heart that we will become friends. Jad from Jordan**



**“I would like to know what happens after death. Haroun from Morocco**



The team welcomed Haroun, talked to him about what the Bible says on this subject, and then shared the Gospel with him.

Haroun said, **“It is all clear now. Jesus is the Son of God, and I want to receive Him into my life. God gave the story of Adam and Eve to teach us that one sin is enough to prevent man from entering paradise to be with the Holy God. Jesus carried this sin on him to make a way for man again.”**

When Haroun said he wanted to receive Jesus, the team prayed with him. They sent him a link to read the Bible, starting with John's Gospel, talked to him about being a new creation, and then connected him with a discipleship team.

# SHARING LOVE AND HOPE



**In 2024, Rita El-Mounayer has been CEO of SAT-7 for five years. Recently, she spoke to Canon J. John for his YouTube channel about her childhood in war-torn Lebanon, her call to SAT-7, and the impact of our broadcasts on people in the region.**

**Some edited excerpts from the interview are provided below.**

Being in Lebanon was a big challenge for me as a child, especially because my mother was very sick, and there was no medical attention for her. She passed away when I was seven years old. My sister was five. But when we were afraid, and there were a lot of bombs around us, my dad would bring a television set, and he would hook it to the car battery, and he would let us watch television. And when the bombs were louder outside, he would come and put the volume higher so we would forget about everything else. And this made us both love television. We said to ourselves, "What about doing television but with a purpose, to give hope to children like us through Jesus Christ?" We both studied media, and we both now work in SAT-7.

“

**What touches people's hearts more than anything else is: "How can you talk about forgiveness?"**

After my screen test, SAT-7 said, "Rita, we would love you to be our children's producer, scriptwriter, and presenter." I was terrified. So I went home, and I couldn't sleep that night. I started weeping and praying and praying and praying. And that night I heard God's voice, something inside of me saying, "Rita, all I want is for you to use this pain that you went through in your childhood years for good, to love these children you're going to serve. And this love is not your love; it's my love to them."



Tell us more about this God that you worship. Tell us more about this hope that you find in Jesus.” And this is what we try to do in SAT-7, praying that this hope will be transformed one day to be faith in the hearts of people. A lady who lives in Tehran, Iran wrote to SAT-7 saying, “I became a Christian because of you. I don’t know any other pastor or a Christian near me, and I cannot go to church because I don’t know where a church is. So you became a church in my house. So when you pray, I pray with you on the screen. When you worship, I worship with you. And I pray one day I will do it in person, and that day, my dear friends in SAT-7, when I meet you in person, I will bow down, and I’ll wash your feet and tell you thank you for all that you’re doing for the Isolated Believers like me.”

I also see people living in places like Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, or Iran, and they’re very vocal, and they’re telling about their passion and love for Christ, even though they know that the price is persecution. A lot of our Iranian team members have families in Iran, and they still want to go on air and say, “We are Christian.” The Turkish team knows what it means to be a Turkish Christian in Türkiye, and they still press on. In Egypt and Lebanon, you can be a Christian, and you can go to worship and to church. But in places like Algeria, Tunisia, or Morocco this is a big challenge. But in Algeria, they are always saying, “They can close our churches, but they can never close our heart to loving Jesus Christ.”

And I’m arguing, “But God, how will I love children that I never met?” He said, “I will let you see them.” And I started, while I was praying, seeing children from all around the Arab World. Children eating ice cream, children with no shoes running around, children on camels. And I felt that night that God had given me this love that hurts.

And God proved to me over the years that it was His call that night because, from the day I joined SAT-7, hundreds of letters came. I started to go around visiting, and I met the children, and they ran to me to have a hug. I felt that they loved me now because they saw me, but I loved them long before because I saw them before.

At SAT-7, we have a golden opportunity to explain our faith because often people don’t know or they don’t understand. And I think what touches people’s hearts more than anything else is: “How can you talk about forgiveness? How can you say that you turn the other cheek to somebody who hates you?”



Rita on the first SAT-7 broadcast



## “REFUGE AND RESILIENCE” THE PARTNERSHIP GATHERING 2024

SAT-7’s annual Partnership Gathering gives our staff and generous supporters an opportunity to praise God for His faithfulness to the ministry and to renew our collective vision for the future. In March, attendees from across the MENA region and far beyond came together in Limassol, Cyprus, for a conference titled “Refuge and Resilience: Strengthening the Next Generation.”

At the opening session, SAT-7 CEO Rita El-Mounayer welcomed attendees to The Partnership Gathering and introduced the focus on the rising generation of the MENA. This was followed by a special feature on the war in the Holy Land produced by the team from SAT-7 ARABIC’s popular current affairs program *You Are Not Alone*. In this film, young Christians living in Bethlehem and Jerusalem spoke movingly about how it is almost impossible to live out their hopes and dreams. Church leaders spoke of the need to pursue political peace but also the perfect peace that Jesus brings.

The rest of the conference was hosted by two young SAT-7 presenters, Manessa and Tia, who also shared their stories as young Christians in Lebanon and Egypt, respectively, in a breakout session run by SAT-7 KIDS.

The second day saw presentations from each of SAT-7’s channels: PARS, TÜRK, ARABIC, and KIDS.

Each of these shared the impact of its programs on the lives of children and youth across the region through video testimonies and on-stage presentations. Many of these were by young staff who were once viewers and are now role models for the next generation of Christians across the region.

Parastoo Poortaheri, co-presenter of the *Hashtag* program for youth, told the story of her journey with SAT-7 PARS and how the channel has impacted both her and her young viewers. A young man from SAT-7 TÜRK shared that in Türkiye, a huge country with a small Christian population, it is hard to build community and friendships. Many Christian youth decide to leave in search of a life where they will not face discrimination because of their faith.



Attendees learned about Hagar, a young Kurdish refugee from Syria, who first appeared on SAT-7 KIDS as a participant in the gameshow *Challenge Accepted*. Her passion for acting then led her into the lead role in a new drama about her journey of hope and faith. She has since appeared on another SAT-7 KIDS program, *Behind the Door*, and will soon become a presenter on the channel.

Madonna, a young viewer from Egypt, explained on video how the openness of the presenters on SAT-7 ARABIC's program *Share Your Heart* about the challenges that they face encouraged her in her faith journey, helping her to understand that Jesus loves her as she is, even with her mistakes and her challenges, and makes her more than good enough to follow Him.

Later in the day, attendees were invited to breakout sessions hosted by staff from SAT-7's studios in Limassol, Beirut, Istanbul, Cairo, and North Africa. The following morning was spent at the Limassol studio of SAT-7 PARS, where presenters of various programs were on hand to show visitors the studio sets and answer questions. The whole group took part in a pre-recorded excerpt of the channel's *Signal* program.

A team of talented singers and musicians from across the ministry led beautiful and moving worship and prayer times to focus attendees' attention on God. Guests at the annual Gala Dinner heard an interview with Sylvia Kwok from North Point Alliance Church in Hong Kong, which has supported SAT-7 for longer than any other church in Asia. Two senior SAT-7 staff also shared their reflections on our ministry. Much of the

work of The Partnership Gathering is done outside the main sessions, in the many informal contacts during breaks and over meals.

We thank God for a memorable conference. We pray that everything learned or shared will inspire attendees in their work and support for SAT-7 so that people in the MENA will be transformed by the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**“ It was my first participation in The Partnership Gathering and it was a very great experience to hear all the good work you are doing. Thanks to the Lord! *Stig Lilleore, Mission Afrika***

- ① Rita El-Mounayer addresses The Partnership Gathering
- ② The Armonia Choir performing on stage
- ③ Manessa and Tia hosted several sessions
- ④ Presenters from SAT-7 PARS celebrating the Nowruz festival
- ⑤ The music team leading worship
- ⑥ Attendees together for the first session
- ⑦ Maryam from *Church4Kids* (right) interviewing Tina from *Golpand*
- ⑧ Parastoo Poortaheri recounts her journey with SAT-7
- ⑨ Sylvia Kwok from North Point Alliance Church in Hong Kong

# PARTNER PROJECTS

## Inspirational programs to empower youth

SAT-7's *Youth for an Enabling Society* project is launching two powerful new productions to further its purpose of inspiring the next generation in the MENA.

The first is *Perhaps God Sees Me*, which focuses on Dina, a young Egyptian woman who believes that no one notices her and that her life has become meaningless. She resolves to kill herself, hoping that God might see her. But when she helps others and has an impact on their lives, she discovers meaning in her own and can rejoice in the joy of others.

The short film is based on a true story and stars well-known Egyptian actress Sahar El Saigh, who said that she was "very happy" to work with SAT-7 because "they always offer programs with a good purpose" and "a deep message." She continued, "For everyone who feels that he is not enough, or that the world has become bleak for him, or who feels

hopeless, the message [of the film] is wonderful." *Perhaps God Sees Me* is in post-production and will be broadcast later this year.

Other Arab celebrities are supporting the *YES* project by sharing their stories on a program called *Star Zone*. Over 30 famous people have been interviewed for the program, some of whom have more than 7 million followers on social media. They share the challenges and struggles they have faced in their careers, encouraging young viewers to overcome their own difficulties and make a positive impact in their societies. The program will be broadcast on SAT-7 PLUS and YouTube, and highlights will be available on other social media platforms.



Interview with a guest  
on *Star Zone*



## Support and counsel for Arab women

Workshop-style support groups and one-to-one counselling are helping Arab women to address issues of inequality and discrimination.

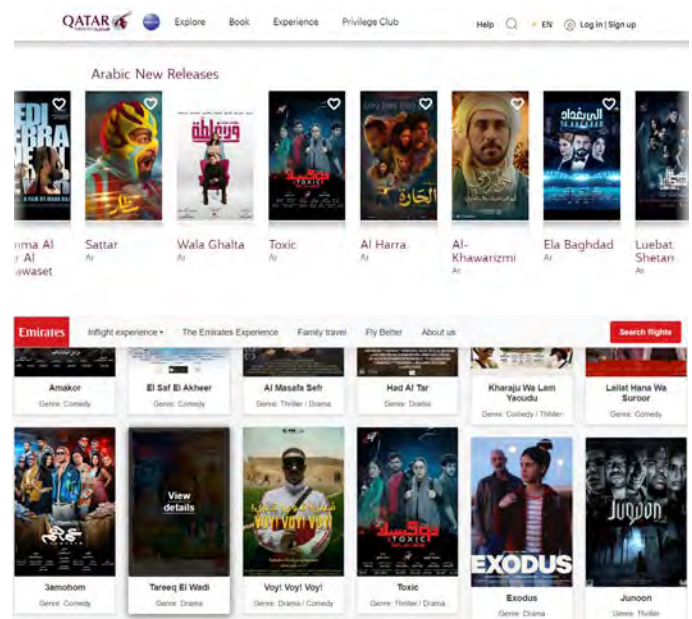
Support groups with a professional counselor have been held in person and online. They help women to understand they are not a mere possession. By listening, addressing women's real problems, and offering support, the team helps participants to feel less isolated and to think differently. Sometimes, they have been asked to come back!

More than 1,600 counseling referrals were made last year – far more than the target of 150. Many of the women receive informal counseling from SAT-7's Viewer Support Team, while some who need specialized help for issues like domestic violence are referred to professional counselors. SAT-7 also has relationships with two organizations where they can send women who need to escape abusive homes.

To supplement the project's flagship program, *Today Not Tomorrow*, two short drama productions are also in preparation. The short video *Life on Hold* inspires women to live full lives now instead of just waiting for marriage.

Online engagement with the project has also far exceeded expectations, indicating that these are new and live issues for many in the MENA. "We didn't expect that there was such a need for this conversation and that people would interact so much," said the project lead, an independent filmmaker from Egypt. "Our Viewer Support Team continues to help people who grapple with these issues."

The goal of the project is that people in the region should experience the freedom to have, change, and manifest an alternative belief equally, like Christianity, regardless of their gender. It is run in partnership with the Norwegian Mission Society, supported by Digni, and implemented by SAT-7 Egypt.



## SAT-7 drama *Toxic* screened by major airlines

SAT-7's first feature film, *Toxic*, has now been made available on the streaming services of Qatar Airways, Emirates, Saudia, Kuwait Airways, and Turkish Airlines. The film tracks the lives of four young people from different ethnic and social backgrounds, now in their 30s, who have survived violence and cruelty of various kinds, and it focuses on the struggle between revenge and forgiveness. The film was produced in partnership with the Norwegian Mission Society, supported by Digni as part of SAT-7's Current Affairs project.

Presenters of *Today Not Tomorrow*

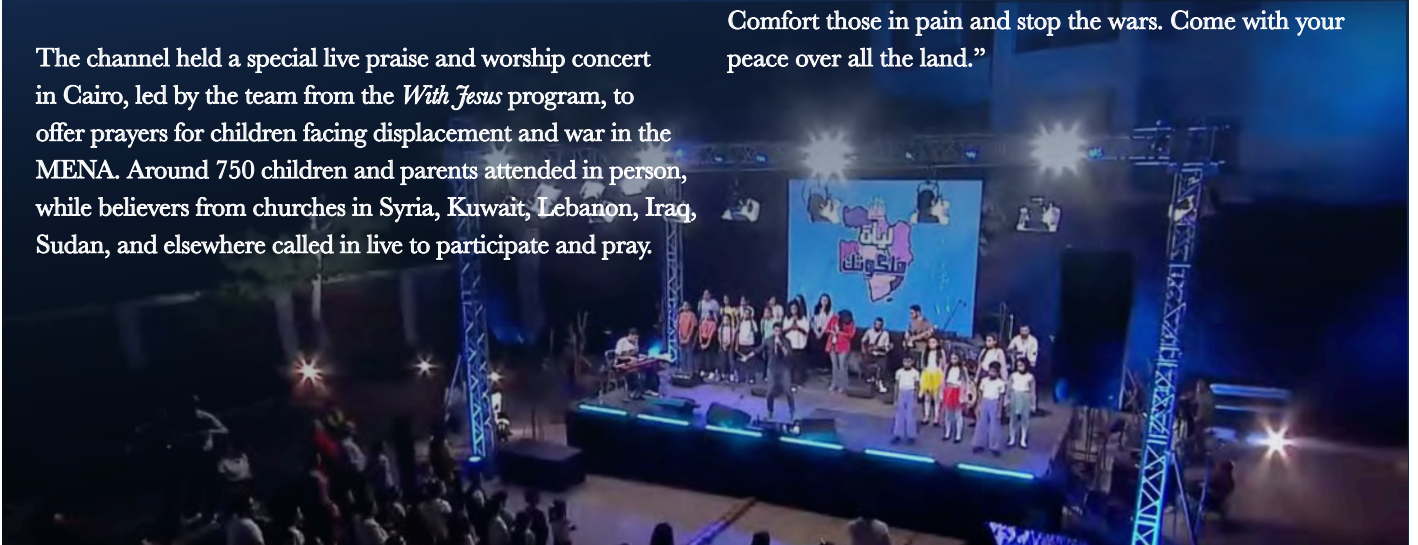


## PRAYING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Thousands of children have been killed in current and recent conflicts in the MENA, and thousands more are refugees or internally displaced. Since children are tomorrow's leaders of the region, continuing wars and instability are threatening the future. So SAT-7 KIDS is showing support for the next generation by calling for prayer.

The channel held a special live praise and worship concert in Cairo, led by the team from the *With Jesus* program, to offer prayers for children facing displacement and war in the MENA. Around 750 children and parents attended in person, while believers from churches in Syria, Kuwait, Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, and elsewhere called in live to participate and pray.

Dany Safwat from Kuwait prayed, "Lord Jesus, stop the war and spread your peace in the world, because you are the God of peace. Lord, protect the children and send them provisions during the war." And Justin Joseph from Egypt prayed, "Lord, let your kingdom come to our earth, your kingdom of joy, peace, and safety. The world is full of evil and wars. Comfort those in pain and stop the wars. Come with your peace over all the land."



## SCHOOL LESSONS FOR AFGHAN CHILDREN

In response to the education crisis in Afghanistan, SAT-7 PARS is releasing an education program for Afghan children who cannot confidently read or write.

"Unfortunately, there are so many children in Afghanistan who do not have access to education in schools," says Nader Taghizadeh, the show's director. "We want our viewers to develop their skills, like critical thinking abilities, and be in a position to engage with the rest of the world. This will give them hope for the future."

Presented by schoolteacher Rashed Azizi, the program will be presented in Dari – a Persian dialect widely spoken in Afghanistan – and focus primarily on basic literacy skills, beginning with the alphabet. The 30-minute episodes are primarily aimed at 5-7-year-olds, but the program will also benefit any illiterate teens and adults who tune in.

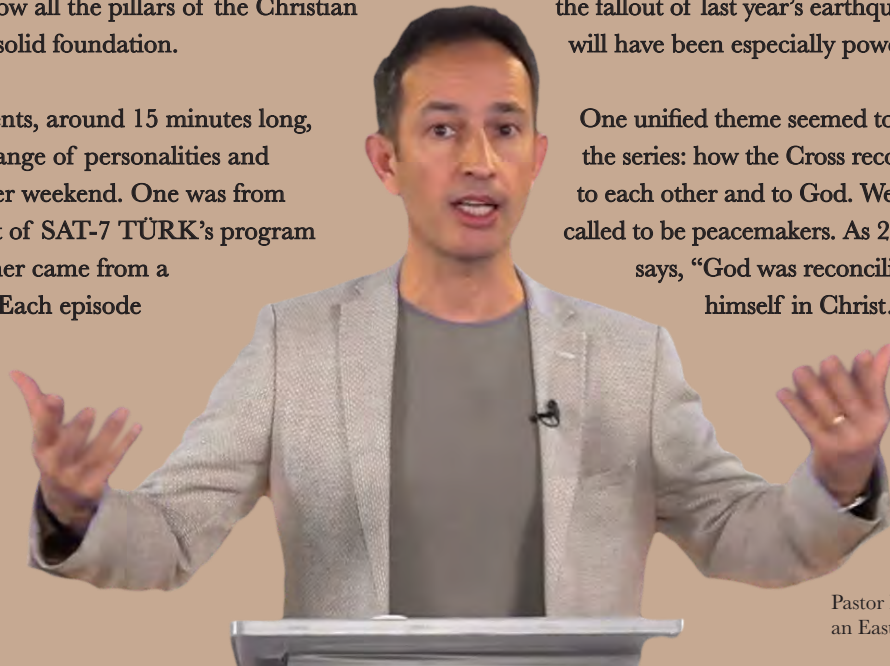
The program will also open doors to the Gospel. Nader explains, "I hope that through an educational program broadcast on satellite television, we can help educate children who cannot read or write, so that eventually, they can also engage with the Good News of the Gospel."



# EASTER REFLECTIONS OFFER LIFE AND HOPE

This Easter, SAT-7 TÜRK broadcast a special series of six Bible reflections, each from a different pastor. These emphasized the centrality of the death and resurrection of Jesus and explained how all the pillars of the Christian faith are built on this solid foundation.

The devotional segments, around 15 minutes long, were presented by a range of personalities and broadcast across Easter weekend. One was from Pastor Volkan Er, host of SAT-7 TÜRK's program *Worldview*, while another came from a pastor in Azerbaijan. Each episode looked at the Passion with reference to a different theme, such as salvation, atonement, and redemption.



Pastor Ismail Serinken sharing an Easter reflection

Some of the reflections applied Jesus' death and resurrection to our daily lives, sharing the message of life after death and hope after despair. For those still suffering from the fallout of last year's earthquakes, the message will have been especially powerful.

One unified theme seemed to emanate from the series: how the Cross reconciles humankind to each other and to God. We are, therefore, called to be peacemakers. As 2 Corinthians 5:19 says, "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ... And he has

committed to us the message of reconciliation."

## INSPIRING STORIES OF RESILIENCE IN IRAQ

SAT-7 ARABIC broadcast two special documentaries from Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, to highlight the resilience of its Christian community. Ten years ago, tens of thousands of Christians from other parts of Iraq fled to the area to escape an uprising by the so-called Islamic State terrorist group. The Church in Erbil rose to the challenge of welcoming the refugees, and many have remained there.

The documentaries featured the stories of Iraqi Christians, interviews with Christian politicians and church leaders, the filming of church services, the opening of a brand-new church complex for an expanding congregation, and an inspiring project that is helping refugee women. They showed how the churches were determined to move forward despite their recent history of conflict, displacement, persecution, and human tragedy and how their experience can bring hope to others.

"The life of a Christian is a true testimony in the Middle East," said Ano Johar, minister of transportation in Kurdistan and a believer himself. "We didn't know the truly effective role of the church until the ISIS catastrophe happened. At that time, we realized that we need every person, every Christian, and every church."





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