



A worship concert filmed on the roof of SAT-7's Beirut studio lifted spirits after the Beirut explosion.

SAT-7 NEWS

2020 SETS RECORD FOR VIEWER RESPONSES TO CHRISTIAN PROGRAMS

While 2020 was an extraordinarily hard year for many, it was also a year in which God was on the move in extraordinary ways. Soaring audience engagement with SAT-7 channels shows that amid COVID-19, the hope of Christ shared through television touched more people than ever in the Middle East and North Africa.

As we enter a new year, SAT-7 looks back on 2020 as a record year of interactions between our viewers and our audience support teams. After the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) began confronting the challenge of COVID-19 in March, a 30 percent climb in audience engagements for SAT-7 overall showed how many turned to Christian programs for support.

The growth was especially marked for the channels that serve Turkish viewers and Arabic-speaking children, and for SAT-7 ACADEMY education programs. Audience engagement for SAT-7 KIDS climbed by 90 percent (to 47,300 contacts). Contacts for the Turkish channel, SAT-7 TÜRK, rose 120 per cent (to 25,300), and audience engagement for SAT-7 ACADEMY soared by 328 per cent (to 47,500). Between January and September 2020, SAT-7 received 310,000 audience engagements in total, almost a third more than during the same period in 2019.

As millions in the region faced months of COVID-19 lockdown and its severe effects on health and incomes, many depended on SAT-7 as a trusted source of spiritual support and emotional support, companionship, and even health advice.

From the beginning of the pandemic, and even when an explosion in Beirut caused mass destruction and trauma, SAT-7 studios in Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, Cyprus, and the United Kingdom resolved to maintain as much live programming as possible. Our belief is that it is essential to remain alongside our millions of viewers in perplexing and unfamiliar times.

Rita El-Mounayer, SAT-7 CEO, said: “Almost a quarter of a century ago, God blessed us with the opportunity of using satellite television as a new way of sharing His Word. Throughout the years since, SAT-7 has been a vital lifeline for isolated believers across the MENA, creating educational programs for those unable to access education,

and spiritual and Bible-teaching programs to connect viewers in worship.

“The incredible blessing of this year has been to serve the people of the region as they coped with unprecedented challenges.”

As the world continues to grapple with the pandemic, the value of television to connect and support viewers remains at the fore. SAT-7 continues to forge a path ahead in 2021, including the landmark launch of its new video-on-demand service and a new strategy for engaging viewers on social media.

“SAT-7 continues its work to bring the Gospel into more homes,” says El-Mounayer. “To support more families as they welcome Christ into their lives, and give the spiritual encouragement so badly needed in the world today as people stay home and continue to seek resources for education, entertainment, and spiritual fellowship.” ■

SAT-7'S NEW VIDEO-ON-DEMAND BRINGS THE GOSPEL TO THE MIDDLE EAST

SAT-7 is launching the Middle East's first on-demand Christian video streaming service. Available worldwide in multiple languages, the new SAT-7 PLUS platform will enable the ministry to bring the life-changing message of the Gospel to a wider audience in the region, including a growing younger demographic engaging via mobile devices.

"I am pleased to say that from January 2021, SAT-7 will be the first Christian satellite television ministry to offer an on-demand streaming service and the only broadcaster to offer this in Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish," says Rita El-Mounayer, SAT-7's CEO. "This will give our audiences the ability to control their own SAT-7 experience, whenever and whatever device they are on. It will include a video-on-demand service for all of our channels."

The platform, which functions similarly to popular secular streaming services, will be available on web browsers and as an app for all mobile devices. As well as access to new programs added daily and a back catalogue of relevant programming from SAT-7 ARABIC, SAT-7 PARS, SAT-7 TÜRK, SAT-7 KIDS, and the education and social development brand SAT-7 ACADEMY viewers will be able to watch the channels live via the platform. They can also use SAT-7 PLUS to communicate directly with channel Audience Relations staff via messaging.

"On-demand content is the expectation of so many media users in the region today. SAT-7 PLUS not only makes us relevant in the contemporary media field, but more importantly, it makes our programming more available and accessible," says Rita El-Mounayer. "Imagine the potential for sharing the Gospel in difficult

contexts. If one of our Christian viewers in Turkey, Egypt, Iran – or even Afghanistan or Yemen – wants to safely share Jesus with a friend, all they have to do is send them a link to an on-demand program that is culturally sensitive, instantly available, and in their own language," she continues.

While satellite broadcasts remain SAT-7's primary platform, as satellite television is very popular in the Middle East and North Africa and can reach audiences without an Internet connection, El-Mounayer explains that the launch of SAT-7 PLUS is an important step in building God's kingdom in the region and an investment for the future. "We are pushing forward to attract Generation Z and beyond, who are more attached to their phones than television," she says.

As many as 30 percent of youth in the region already choose to watch television through on-demand streaming, says Antoine Karam, SAT-7's Broadcast and IT Director. But, he shares, "The content that is out there already is not unfortunately positive or life-giving. With SAT-7 PLUS, we aspire to break through the 'dark box' that mobile devices and other devices can be for young people, and bring hope using the same medium. As we know, just one word from Jesus can be a game-changer."

In order to reach as many viewers as possible, the platform is available in a

variety of bandwidths, including audio-only for the slowest Internet connections. Programs can also be downloaded to watch offline, so they can be viewed on-the-go or even when Internet is inconsistent. And to protect the security of viewers streaming from sensitive locations, no personal information will be required in order to access the content. To help viewers find more content relevant to their needs and interests, SAT-7 PLUS will offer recommendations for what to watch next based on the viewer's preferences, while an age-appropriate content filter for children is also built in.

While SAT-7 PLUS is an important development towards SAT-7's long-term goals, its launch also helps meet very real immediate needs. "With in-person fellowship still disrupted, the ability to find spiritual support, and content that meets other holistic needs, on screen and online is more important than ever," says El-Mounayer. "SAT-7 PLUS will enable us to bring the hope of Jesus to more people, in more places, in 2021." ■

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