

News from SAT-7
November 2021

INSIGHT

A young boy with dark hair and a bright smile is the central focus of the image. He is wearing a grey and white patterned sweater. In the background, several other children are visible, slightly out of focus, suggesting a group setting or a public gathering. The lighting is soft, and the overall tone is hopeful and positive.

HOPE

in the darkest of times

A lifeline for Afghans | Building peace
in Lebanon | Strengthening Christian
families in Turkey

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

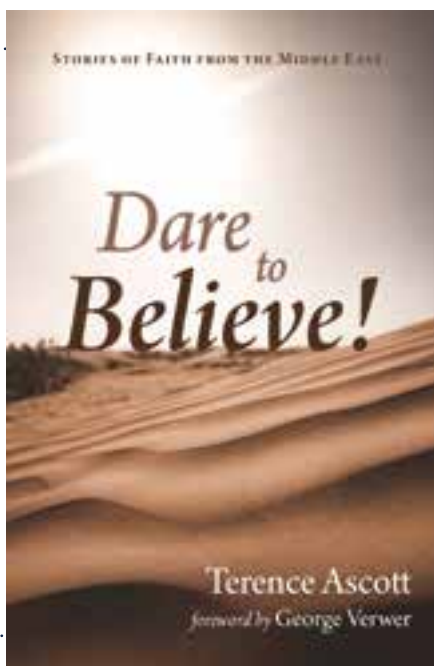


“WATCH AND WAIT” WITH THE MIDDLE EAST CHURCH

Like the shepherds watching over their flocks and waiting for the dawn, Advent is a time when believers around the world “watch and wait” for the coming Messiah.

This Advent, join with Middle East Christians as we prepare together for Jesus’ coming. Through SAT-7’s free prayer guide, *Watch and Wait with the Middle Eastern Church*, you can meet our brothers and sisters in the region, many of whom are keeping watch alone, waiting for the day they can worship freely. Learn how they are preparing for Christmas, pray for them, and reflect through daily Bible verses.

Download your free prayer guide [here](#)



GIVE THE GIFT OF INSPIRATION THIS CHRISTMAS

Dr Terence Ascott’s exciting memoir is the perfect Christmas gift for friends with a heart for the Church in the Middle East. SAT-7’s Founder and President combines his dramatic personal story with both the courageous witness of Middle East Christians, and the birth and growth of SAT-7 into a media network that today broadcasts to millions.

[CLICK HERE ►](#) TO WATCH INTERVIEW

“This is a story of Christian faith, courage, and perseverance, which needs to be heard... If you have ever wondered what the Gospel of Christ means in a harsh world, this story is for you.”

– Stephen Green, Baron Green of Hurstpierpoint (United Kingdom)

[Get your copy here](#)

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AN AFGHAN GIRL

Front cover image source: Afghan boy in Iran

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All viewer names have been changed to protect their identities.

LETTER FROM SAT-7'S CEO

Dear friends,

At the time of writing, our region is being consumed by darkness. Afghanistan has fallen to the Taliban, endangering Christians and other minorities, removing hard-won freedoms from women and girls, and sending shockwaves across the world. In Lebanon, the crisis has only deepened more than a year since the Beirut blast, with October witnessing the worst violence seen on the streets since the civil war. Alongside these crises are others that have fallen from the headlines: Yemen, Syria, The Holy Land, Libya; the region-wide effects of COVID-19 and economic crisis.

The human suffering in our region consumes our prayers every day – as does giving thanks to God that we can provide His Hope to people living in the darkness.

Our message to those who are suffering – and indeed to those who perpetrate suffering – is simple. **There is hope in God.** He loves and values you more than you know. In Him, you can find new life and renewal that can also help transform the world around you.

We know, from the more than 1,000 viewer contacts SAT-7 receives every day through our multiple media platforms, what a difference hope in God makes. Hope alone, in some cases, can be the difference between life and death. Coupled with fellowship and teaching that sustains isolated believers, special programming for women and children, personal support from Audience Relations teams, and the holistic ministry that aims to improve life for Middle Easterners in every way we can – God's love, shared through SAT-7, is breaking through in people's lives.

We are so grateful for all the support you give to SAT-7 and our viewers. Keep them in your prayers, and stay safe and well.

Yours in Christ,



Rita El-Mounayer
Chief Executive Officer



[CLICK HERE](#) TO WATCH RITA'S LATEST VLOG

HOPE FOR AFGHANS

Fear and despair now overshadow many lives in Afghanistan, with Christians, other minorities, and women at risk while others struggle to feed their families. Incredibly, SAT-7's viewers there are still speaking out, responding to programs, and seeking comfort from the channel that has become "like family".



“I grew up free of the Taliban and was educated before I was married,” explains Maneli*, a woman from Afghanistan. “Seeing their treatment of women, and human beings in general, it is beyond what I could imagine. Their presence and behaviour cause terror. How can we go backwards and live with this barbarism?”

Since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, women and girls like Maneli – many of whom are now prohibited from work or studying – have been reaching out to SAT-7 to make their voices heard. “This is the end of all my dreams... I do not see a bright future here for myself or for Afghan girls,” writes 16-year-old Armineh in a heartbreaking letter sent to SAT-7 PARS. (See back cover for the full text of Armineh’s letter.)

“Girls as young as seventh grade are being confined to their homes,” explains Zahra M., an Iranian journalist and social activist who recently travelled to Afghanistan and was interviewed live on the SAT-7 PARS program *Insiders*.

Believers turn to Christ for hope

Meanwhile, some Christians have received death threats and others have been forced to flee or go into hiding. “The situation is bad enough for ordinary citizens – it is so much worse for Christians, whose lives are in danger every minute of every day,” expresses Shahin. “Pray for me. In the space of one month, my family and I moved across several provinces to escape capture by the Taliban. I have since had to be separated from my family.”

Some viewers have shared that while they take hope, strength, and comfort from God, their fear for their families remains strong.

“I don’t fear for my own life, because I laid my life down for the name of Jesus Christ,” shares Faraz. “But I have also put my family in grave danger.” Faraz’ main concern is that if the Taliban find out about his faith, “they will then threaten my family.”

“In their darkest times, our viewers in Afghanistan are reaching out to SAT-7,” explained Rita El-Mounayer, SAT-7’s CEO. “We have become like family to them. Just as someone might reach out to a sister or brother, a parent, or a friend, SAT-7 has become a source of comfort to the isolated;

a listening ear and a counsellor to the distressed and troubled. “Despite the danger for viewers in Afghanistan if they are caught contacting us, they continue to reach out, wanting to make sure their voices are heard or just wanting to hear a reassuring and kind voice. This is a humbling reminder of our role in supporting our viewers, being there for them when they need us, and ensuring that a message of God’s love and His hope continues to be broadcast on all our programs.”

How SAT-7 helps

In addition to the Audience Relations team member or counsellor at the end of the phone, Afghan viewers can find hope through SAT-7 PARS programming. The channel broadcasts two weekly programs made by partner Pamir Productions and recorded in Dari, the regional variation of Persian spoken in Afghanistan.

These are *Secret of Life*, which offers a Christian viewpoint on current events as well as biblical teaching and prayer, and *Window of Light*, a program for families.

“The only way and solution for the people of Afghanistan, and for all of us, is to look and depend on the Lord, the living God, who is almighty and full of mercy and grace,” shares Pastor Shoaib Ebadi on a recent episode of *Secret of Life*. “When we are suffering, God tells us to depend on Him.”

SAT-7 PARS is also adding two new additional programs in Dari, which are currently in production by our partner Media Mission the Messengers. Viewers in Afghanistan can also benefit from the many other encouraging programs on SAT-7 PARS, including children’s programs, as the Farsi dialect of Persian is also understood there.

In addition, SAT-7 continues to raise awareness of the plight of Christians in Afghanistan around the world. In one of many examples, Iranian children prayed for children in Afghanistan on SAT-7 PARS. [CLICK HERE »](#) [TO WATCH THE CLIP](#)

The words of Faheem, another viewer from Afghanistan, express the difference support from fellow believers can make. “I am grateful to you, dear friends, for remembering us and being aware of our situation,” he says “I believe that the Lord saves and helps us.” ■

“I don’t fear for my own life, because I laid my life down for the name of Jesus Christ.”
Faraz*

*All viewer names have been changed to protect identities.

BRIDGING LEBANON'S DIVIDES

Almost three-quarters of Lebanon's population are living in dire poverty, while families are shattered by the Beirut blast and communities remain fragmented by years of sectarianism. SAT-7's partnership projects in the heart of these communities are supporting the most vulnerable and helping bridge divisions among the next generation.



Refugee children learn for the first time

SAT-7 ACADEMY's life-changing *My School* curriculum is now being used in a new group educational setting with some of the most in-need children in Lebanon.

In partnership with a local organisation, Heart for Lebanon, the programs are being used from

October 2021 in two centres for Syrian refugee children aged 6 to 11 who have never received formal schooling. "In addition to attending classes, children will be given tablets to continue learning from *My School* at home," explains Nicole Thoma, Development Officer. "By assessing the children's progress, SAT-7 will be able to further hone and adapt the program."

“Lebanon is going through a very difficult time. But when we lay the groundwork for hope and unity through media, then see it bear fruit on the streets, we are reminded why our work is so important.”

Maroun Bou Rached,
Executive Director
of SAT-7 Lebanon



Lebanon: Our Story project update from Phil Hilditch, Development Officer

“As Lebanon holds its breath to see what the future will bring, SAT-7 and its partners, the Danish and Lebanese Bible Societies and the Centre for Church-Based Development, seek to play our part in contributing to a new story for the country, one characterised by hope and unity.

A recent training session provided space for more than 20 media professionals, from within and outside SAT-7, to connect and share key lessons on how media can help bring social cohesion by opening up the space for the inclusion of voices from across

sectarian divides and being a platform for peace rather than feeding the fires of conflict. Meanwhile, our Storytelling Club events – which give young people from different backgrounds space to tell their personal stories and create a shared story for their generation – are already bearing fruit. One participant, 19-year-old Marie Belle Milan, said, ‘One activity after the other struck down the transparent walls between us. Struck them down brick by brick.’

From our experiences of this project so far, it is increasingly clear that while the road ahead is difficult, the journey has only become more important. It is urgent that we safeguard Lebanon as a country for the next generation.” ■

Above: Teacher Carol Bardakji presents an episode from the third season of *My School*

Below: Young people in Lebanon gather to share their stories

WORSHIP IS MOST-WATCHED ON SAT-7 PLUS

SAT-7's new on-demand streaming service SAT-7 PLUS is thriving, nine months after it launched as the first Christian platform of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa. Encouragingly, SAT-7 PLUS' most-watched program is *As in Heaven*, a new Arabic worship program created especially for the digital audience.

"The steady growth in SAT-7 PLUS' first year is very positive," says Antoine Karam, Broadcast and IT Director. The streaming service is well on track to exceed its first-year target of 25,000 unique users, if current trends continue. For a completely new platform in the competitive television streaming services market, explains Karam, this is very positive.

"Of course, if we reach even one person with the message of God's love for them, we can give thanks," he says. "But from the number of viewers watching, and the type of content they are watching the most, we know that this new platform is beginning to have a wide impact."

SAT-7 PLUS allows viewers to stream every SAT-7 channel live as well as to watch programs for all ages in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish on demand.

As in Heaven, the most-streamed program, has been watched in whole or in part more than 9,000 times.

The program's format is simple: church and worship leaders guide viewers to pray with them through the words of the Bible.

"We try to help viewers focus on the Lord; His words, His promises and the truth of His word in our hands, even if we hear news that cause us to doubt or be anxious," explains Egypt-based producer Andrew Gamal. "The program is making a difference because we are living through difficult times. The most common comment we receive from people is that the program should be longer, because they want to pray with us more." ■

PLAY | ▶



CLICK TO WATCH SAT-7 PLUS

Filming *As in Heaven*
at SAT-7's Egypt studios



IMPACT SPOTLIGHT PERSIAN WORLD



Viewer contact soars

In the first six months of 2021, viewers in Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan reached out to SAT-7 29,000 times – more than double the engagement received for the same period in 2020.

Alongside satellite broadcasts and digital streaming on SAT-7 PLUS, the team have been sending inspirational videos, program segments, and encouraging messages to viewers through WhatsApp and Instagram. WhatsApp is now the way that 64 percent of SAT-7 PARS viewers engage with the channel, showing how much viewers value this private channel of encouragement.

29,000 viewer contacts
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the first six months of 2021

“God makes our impossibles possible”

The Persian children’s program *Jungle of Golpand* (*Golden Advice*) has been making a big impact on young viewers. It shares messages that can be lifechanging for children in Iran – that God loves them, that He is working in their lives, and that they can bring change in the world.

The *Golpand* team recently heard from Narek, a thoughtful and inspired teenage boy from Iran who wrote to share how he was blessed by Luke 5 after watching the program. “I drew so much blessing from this section,” he said, “because

Simeon’s ‘impossible’ became possible. For example, he didn’t think he would catch many fish, but because the Lord had said it, he went and caught so many fish. With the presence of the Lord our ‘impossibles’ will also be made possible. For example, I am a kid, but the Lord says, ‘Read the word, share the good news, send a blessing to *Golpand*.’ I might say, ‘Come on, what can anything I say achieve?’ But the Lord says: ‘You go ahead, and I will make your impossibles possible.’”

Sharing women’s voices from inside Iran

The live women’s program *Insiders* began growing during the pandemic and has not stopped since. When the team began hosting guests by video link as well as in the studio, this meant they could hear voices from inside Iran. This has provided many more opportunities for crucial voices to be heard, such as a female writer and activist who recently spoke out against honour killings and the underlying attitudes in the country that cause women to be treated as lesser than men. ■

“
We can see
God’s footprints
and the impact of
His presence in
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A woman in Iran to
SAT-7 PARS’ Audience
Relations team

Left: Backstage on the set of
Jungle of Golpand (*Golden Advice*)

Right: Filming the live program
Insiders in the London studios



IMPACT SPOTLIGHT TURKEY



Using social media to strengthen families

Two new SAT-7 TÜRK parenting and relationship video series, made especially for social media, are receiving a strong response from their audience. One episode of *Family Unity*, which discusses the increased challenges facing families today from a Christian perspective, received 100,000 views. “What a beautiful and unique program. God led me to watch *Family Unity*, and it really resonates with me,” shared one viewer.

Parents are Asking, which gives viewers the chance to ask their parenting questions to a psychologist, is also being well-received, and the team are seeing growth amongst those watching. For example, viewers of *Parents are Asking* are moving from asking “why is my child like this?” to seeking solutions they can take part in. “What can a parent or teacher do if they see a child who has problems with self-esteem in elementary school?” one viewer queries, while another asks: “What can we do to prevent children from being bullied?”

Uniting church voices to remember an inspiration

In a new documentary for SAT-7 TÜRK, the channel has brought together voices from different denominations to tell the story of a man whose humble faith also crossed many barriers: Padre Luigi Iannito, a beloved Italian priest who ministered for 50 years in Turkey and who passed away earlier this year.

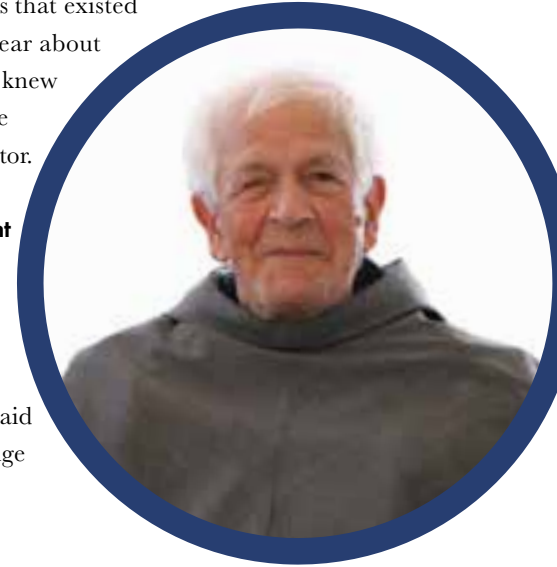
In *Padre Luigi – A Century of Humility*, viewers see how the well-known church leader was called to Turkey and how his love, devotion, and care for others shone through his ministry. The production features Turkish church leaders and community members from Syriac Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant churches, talking about their experiences with Padre Luigi and how he changed their lives on the road to Christ.

“Padre Luigi welcomed all in Turkey to Christianity, despite the prejudices that existed in society. It is very important to hear about his life and work from people who knew him,” says Ali Kerem Gülerman, the documentary’s award-winning director.

Video: Hope in the darkest moment

Presenter Şemsa shares how a woman who was struggling with a mental health crisis contacted her after a broadcast of the program *Homemade*. “In your program, you said there was someone who could change this pain. What must I do?” ■

[CLICK HERE](#) TO WATCH THE CLIP



Above: Padre Luidi Iannito, as pictured in the new SAT-7 TÜRK documentary

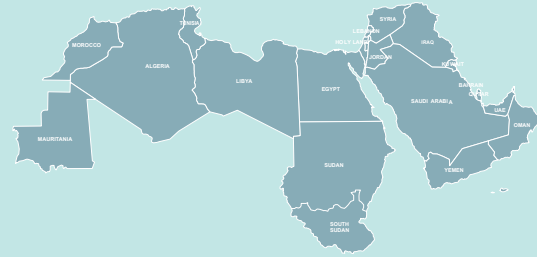


Left: *Parents are Asking* is helping families strengthen their bonds

Below: Şemsa and Kanivar, presenters of *Family Unity*



IMPACT SPOTLIGHT ARAB WORLD



A child refugee excels

My School, from the educational brand SAT-7 ACADEMY, recently heard from Iraqi mother Renalda, who wrote that even though her nine-year-old daughter Yara missed years of schooling before her family fled to Lebanon, she has not fallen behind thanks to the primary curriculum program. “She has been watching the *My School* program since we were in Iraq, and this is why she is excelling,” Renalda explains. “She has already learned from *My School* all the topics she is studying at school, and she finds them very easy, thanks to you.”

SAT-7 KIDS has stepped up its support for children as millions in the Arab World remain out of school. As the new school year began, so did regular live streams by the teachers of the primary school program *My School*, a new academic competition program called *Follow Up*, and other programs offering expert educational advice, arts and crafts activities, and music therapy.

[CLICK HERE](#) TO WATCH “CHALLENGE ACCEPTED”

Promoting disability awareness

The brand is also working with inspiring children to film the third series of *City of Stars*, which brings together children with and without disabilities to make a program filled with play-based drama and music. *City of Stars* models the integration of children with differing physical and learning abilities in a region that is generally not inclusive, while teaching viewers of all ages about child protection issues and children’s rights.

A moving memorial

One year on from the August 2020 Beirut blast, SAT-7 ARABIC remembered the victims with moving coverage.

A special program gathered family members together at the blast site, where

they shared stories of hope and resilience.

“It is a journey of growth,” said Elie Hasrouty, whose father was killed in the blast. “Of course, there is despair and surrender and doubt. But, at the same time, there is a journey with the Lord; a journey of freedom, of trust in God, who I know through Jesus Christ.”

Positivity for youth and children

SAT-7 ARABIC’s new program *A Way for Tomorrow*, has amplified the voices of 120 diverse young Arabs this year from across the region. The program, which is produced in Egypt, gives youth a space to share their vision for how rights should be realised, and how a diverse society can coexist peacefully.

In a region where young people face many tough challenges and often feel unrepresented, producer Rafik George and director Lilian Rafaat say that this morning current affairs program is “filled with cheerful, positive energy and aims to present a positive outlook for viewers and help them find solutions for daily struggles.”

Meanwhile, SAT-7’s Arabic children’s channel, SAT-7 KIDS, is introducing a raft of exciting and engaging new content for its young audiences, including a new series of spots featuring the voices of 100 children from across the region on a variety of topics. New programs include the Bible knowledge gameshow *Challenge Accepted*, *A Story and a Verse*, a program made in the Gulf dialect that teaches children Bible stories and important Christian values such as humility, forgiveness, and patience, and *Taktaka*, a new, fast-paced social media-style program including music videos and other fun segments. Popular existing programs such as *Allo Marianne* and *Bible Heroes* also continue for loyal and longterm viewers.

Right: Young people on the set of *A Way for Tomorrow*



Below: *A Story and a Verse* features a loving grandmother character



Right: Young actors shine in *City of Stars*, filmed in Egypt

Did you know?
SAT-7 ARABIC has the most watched Christian YouTube channel in the Arab World, with 285k subscribers.

As *Allo Marianne* began its new season, the team heard from viewer Mabrouk from Egypt, who said, “I have learned a lot from *Allo Marianne*, like how to get closer to God. I’ve started to notice many things I didn’t before. I’ve also learned to share with my parents and to respect others. I love the program a lot.” ■

WILL YOU HELP SAT-7 BRING HOPE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

None of the impact shared in this magazine would be possible without the supporters who pray for and give to our ministry.

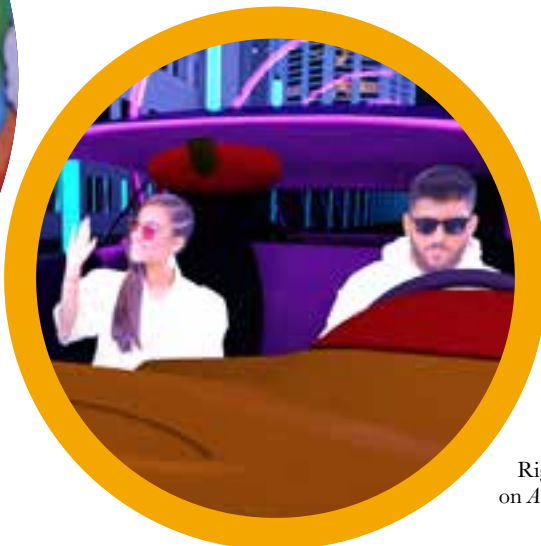
Will you join us in bringing God’s hope to the Middle East and North Africa? This region is going through some of its darkest moments in recent memory. But as you have read, when Christians work together to advance God’s kingdom – to bring His hope and work to improve lives – the light can break through.

GIVE: Visit www.sat7.org/donate to find out how you can help bring God’s hope in these darkest of times.

WATCH: Watch SAT-7 online at www.sat7plus.org

Above: Mai Melki, who encouraged the world by playing piano amid ruins, appears on the special memorial coverage of the Beirut blast

[CLICK HERE](#) TO WATCH THE CLIP



Left: The presenters of *Taktaka*

Right: Backstage on *Allo Marianne*



OPEN LETTER FROM AN AFGHAN GIRL

"Armineh" is 16 years old. She dreams of going to university, of becoming a politician – and now these doors are shut. But Armineh wants to be heard. Please pray for her and for the countless others like her. You can read more from SAT-7 viewers in Afghanistan inside this magazine.

"I write down what is on my heart with my eyes full of tears. I am writing during the utter confusion of these days; when so many hearts are broken, so many are living without hope and are filled with sadness.

Before these days, there were so many years of grief and war, and sometimes joy, too. When I think of those times now, they seem to be a completely different world. A world where everything was different; where I was familiar with peace and laughter, and I experienced being alive. It was a little like a kind of heaven.

On 15 August 2021, the Taliban were able to take over our country, and this was the end of my dreams. I lost hope – it was as if all the doors were closed to me. I no longer have the strength to speak, and I write this letter to express through my pen the pain that I am feeling and to make you aware of the suffering of millions of Afghans.

When I consider the limitations that will be put in place by the new regime, I think perhaps there is no future for me. Because under this new regime, girls and women will not receive equal rights and women will not have their proper place in society. After 20 years of struggle to obtain their rights, it only took a few days for all that had been built to be razed to the ground.

I do not see a bright future here for myself or for any Afghan girls, because we must be trapped in a *chador* [burka], only able to peer through a small opening, as though through the bars of a prison window, and somehow live our lives.

Is this life? Is this humanity? A life in which you are like a prisoner, and when the time comes to be released, you are in the next world? I plead with you to make my voice heard by the people of the world. Our future is in your hands."

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