



SAT-7 NEWS

SAT-7 SA Newsletter—July 2017

FARSI CHANNEL DOUBLES POTENTIAL AUDIENCE IN IRAN AS IT LAUNCHES ON NEW SATELLITE

SAT-7's Farsi (Persian) language channel, SAT-7 PARS, has been broadcasting for ten years on the Hotbird satellite to a wide audience in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, the rest of the Middle East and Europe. It is now also live on Yahsat, a hugely popular satellite platform in Iran with an estimated 10 million viewing households in the country.

“This has been our dream for several years as Yehsat is an increasingly popular satellite with Iranians and it will enable us to interact with a whole new audience in Iran and other parts of Central Asia,” says SAT-7 PARS Senior Manager Panayiotis Keenan.

Increasing SAT-7 PARS' audience

Yehsat serves an estimated 10 million TV households in Iran, out of the 20 million homes with access to satellite TV. Its high-power beam, focused specifically on Iran and Afghanistan, requires a much smaller and cheaper dish than other satellites. Yehsat has become a favourite with Farsi speakers, also because of the quality and variety of its Farsi-speaking channels.

The only Christian channel

“By broadcasting on Yehsat we have a whole new viewership; industry data indicates that it probably doubles the number of potential viewers for SAT-7 PARS in Iran,” explains SAT-7 Founder, Dr Ascott.

“In addition, there are no other Christian channels on this satellite and so this is actually quite a unique and special opportunity for us.”

Enhanced viewer experience

Yehsat allows a better-quality picture, and (later) upgrading to High Definition (HD). The addition of Yehsat doubles the number of hours of Farsi SAT-7 can broadcast, enabling it to expand its programme range. “While the same schedule as on Hotbird is now broadcasted, the eventual plan is to have a different schedule for Yehsat,” shares Keenan. This will allow more choice for viewers who have access to both the Yehsat and Hotbird satellites.

SAT-7 ethos and character

SAT-7's positive, politically and culturally sensitive Christian programming has won the trust of many in the region, and this is believed to be the main reason that it can now broadcast on Yehsat. ■

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It's been a year since I came to faith and everything has changed. God has used you to save us. We don't have any churches or fellowships in Iran. We have individual churches; we talk to our Lord in our hearts and have fellowship with Him. We are spiritually fed by your teachings and programs. Wherever I go, I tell people about all that I've learned from your programs. People warn me not to, but how can I keep quiet? I was dead, but now I'm alive. I have a relationship with my God and live with Him. I want everyone to know and believe in Jesus and be set free, just like me. Glory to God!

- Mehrad in Iran

WHY IS THAT? ADDRESSES CHILDREN'S CONCERNS

The 26 May attack on Christians in Minya, Egypt, left many young believers questioning if God has abandoned them. SAT-7 KIDS' program *Why Is That?* addresses their concerns.

This tragic event follows a range of recent attacks against Coptic Christian communities of Egypt. It has left many children of the region shaken up, questioning both their faith and the world they live in. *Why Is That?* immediately responded to the attack, addressing the incident and young viewers' needs.

"Originally, we were planning another episode," Presenter Essam Nagy says. "But three hours before going live, we heard about the attack and changed the topic of the episode."

The attack left children shaken

On 26 May, along a desert road in north-west Minya, a bus and other vehicles transporting Coptic Christians on a pilgrimage was attacked by gunmen. About ten armed men stopped the convoy and opened fire on the travellers. They then fled the scene, leaving 29 dead - including two children - and 25 wounded.

Addressing concerns

Once on air, the *Why Is That?* team paid their condolences to the affected families and opened communication with the young viewers - many who had already been exposed to disturbing scenes of the incident.

"I said to the kids that the Lord is near and hears their cries, and that Jesus has

not and will never abandon them," Essam says. "The first phone call we received was from a child in Beni Suef, the city where the attacked bus began its journey from."

Many children called in to the live program to say that they forgave the killers and would pray for them. One young girl called in to say: "May God be with us and not let this happen again." When Essam asked if she would feel abandoned by God, should such an incident be repeated, she replied "yes". Essam gently explained that she must trust in the Lord always, and that He loves her through everything.

Encouragement through prayer

Essam guided the children in a short prayer, helping the young viewers to remember to trust Jesus and stay close to Him through hard times: "You are the heroes of faith. The small light inside you touches all people around you. Jesus said: 'You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you, is greater than he who is in the world,' John 4:4."

Essam reflects on the episode

"When an incident like this occurs, we have to address it!" Essam says. "We want them to know, in their hearts, that

Jesus is there for them. When evil things happen, we all can take refuge in Him." Essam explains that children of the region are continuously exposed to terrible news.

"It was a bit challenging for us to address such a fresh wound on air, but God was ready with answers. The kids spoke about forgiveness, love, and peace to those who are in pain."

Impacting families

"Children are like seeds," Essam explains. "When you plant them in good soil they will grow delicious fruit. Investing in them while they are young is very important. Through these children's testimonies, faith shall not only be restored but also challenged and reinforced. This is how we can strengthen Christian families and the Church in the Middle East." ■

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**Hello Mr Know. I can't thank you enough for the love and generosity that you sow in our kids. Despite the persecution in Minia, you continued speaking about love to everyone. I see Jesus in you, and I learn a lot from you. Thank you!
- A mother from Egypt**

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