

REACHING IRANIANS DESPITE BARRIERS

After widespread protests across Iran, a governmental block on social media platforms has limited SAT-7's communication with viewers of the Persian-speaking channel SAT-7 PARS.

Protests began at the end of December 2017, as a response to high inflation and various frustrations with standards of living. As a result, the Iranian government has blocked social media platforms such as *Telegram* and *Instagram* in an effort to disrupt communication between protesters. This has also had an impact on our SAT-7 PARS audience relations team and their contact with viewers in Iran.

Telegram is the most popular messaging app in Iran, with over half of the population active on the platform. Nearly 50 percent of all viewer contact received from Iran by SAT-7 in 2017 was via *Telegram*. This included many messages from children and young people who enjoy being in contact with the hosts of our children's programs. In addition, isolated believers find encouragement and support from the online supportive communities that have developed on SAT-7 PARS *Telegram* groups.

Iran's current block on *Telegram* has disrupted this source of support and our main point of contact for viewers. With *Facebook*, *YouTube*, and *Twitter* already blocked in Iran since 2009, connecting with our Iranian viewers has become even more challenging.

It is not clear if or when the Iranian government's ban on *Telegram* will be lifted. In the meantime, our audience relations team are adapting to the situation, and finding new methods of communication that are accessible to those in Iran. SAT-7 PARS still broadcasts programs via satellite 24/7, reaching millions of homes in Iran.

- **Thank God that we have this opportunity via satellite television to share God's love, and our prayer is that these programs would bring much needed hope.**
- **Please pray that SAT-7 would be able to continue to encourage and support believers within Iran, both through our programming and direct contact. Pray with us for peace across the nation of Iran.**

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Prayer + News

Church service in Algeria

MAKING HOPE VISIBLE

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POLICE CLOSE CHURCH IN ALGERIA

SAT-7 friends and producers in Algeria have asked for prayer after their church was closed by the local authorities. The church in Aïn Turk, near the north-western town of Oran, was sealed off late 2017 by police, who claim it lacks state approval.

Salah, SAT-7's contact explained that the closure is a severe blow for local Christians. He said: "Please can SAT-7 supporters pray for this situation and ask for God's wisdom for the Algerian leadership. The church is not only used for services. It's a centre where we hold a Bible school and organise a lot of seminars. Once a month we have a church service together with all the churches in this region. Now, we can't do any of these activities."

The church is affiliated with the Protestant Church of Algeria (EPA), which has been registered with the Algerian government since 2011. The church has now provided the authorities with all the requested documentation, but its future remains uncertain.

Despite the restrictions Christians face, a first-generation Church is blooming in Algeria. The country has been left scarred by a decade of civil war and is still struggling. Algerians of all backgrounds are searching for answers – and many are finding healing in the Gospel.

Thousands of new believers are baptised every year, especially among the Berber people in the mountainous Kabyle region. Christians generally have more freedom in this region compared with Arab areas such as Aïn Turk. "It's not easy for a church to exist in this Arab area; people don't accept us," Salah explained.

SAT-7 ARABIC broadcasts several shows made in Algeria that help believers grow in their faith, including *Bible Teaching from Algeria* and *Free Souls*, a moving testimony program. The channel also shows a weekly worship and preaching program called *My Church*. As Salah explained, "SAT-7 is a blessing for our church and for all Algerian Christians. Many don't have a church or live far from any church, so SAT-7 is like their church."

- **Please pray for the Christians in Algeria.**
- **Give thanks for SAT-7's programs made in Algeria.**



MEET OUR VIEWERS

Please pray for the following viewers while reading their messages:

From a viewer in Afghanistan – “After my parents were murdered, I struggled, but now I watch all your worship songs and movies (SAT-7 PARS). Pray for me to get a Bible to learn more.”

From a viewer in Turkey – “I felt I was worth nothing because of the way my family treated me, but now I know that God loves and values me. Thank Him with me.”

From a viewer in Algeria – “Through your channel, I heard about Jesus and His sacrifice. Pray for me to understand more about His way of peace and how to get a Bible.”

From a viewer in Iran – “I used to sell my body for a living. But Jesus freed me, and now I am forgiven. I would like to speak to someone about faith, but there are no believers here. Pray I can meet someone else who knows Jesus Christ.”

From a young SAT-7 KIDS viewer – “Thank you all for the best, most beautiful and important hour I spend with "My School" program on SAT-7. I would like to suggest to do an English course for parents as well. Thank you!”



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE CHURCH IN ALGERIA

- Please pray for the situation in Ain Turk and for wisdom for the Algerian leadership. Pray for the re-opening of the church.
- Give thanks for the growth of the Berber church and for the several thousand new believers who are baptised every year.
- Pray for SAT-7's series, *Free Souls* that features strong personal testimonies of women from Algeria.
- Pray that live on-air testimonies will continue to be an inspiration and encouragement to others. Pray for *Bible Teaching* from Algeria as it helps people to understand how they can communicate with God each day through prayer and worship.
- Pray for the continued spiritual hunger of this young Church in Algeria.
- Ask that SAT-7 will effectively share God's love with seekers and disciple believers with the truth of God's Word.
- Pray for Algerian Berber viewers who contact SAT-7 to share:

“Every Tuesday night I call my friends in the village (some of them are not believers) and ask them to join my family to watch together the testimonies of brothers and sisters in My Church who came to know the Lord. God changed their lives! We even watch the re-run on Fridays. We need these kinds of programmes!”

MEET OUR VIEWERS

Please pray for the following viewers while reading their messages:

From a viewer in Swaziland – “I give thanks for your programs. They are like an open window for everyone to hear the living message of God.”

From a viewer in Egypt – “You have a very respectful channel for my children. Pray they grow up to be like the *Bible Heroes* on your programs.”

From a viewer in Saudi Arabia – “I read about Jesus on the internet and want to be a daughter of Jesus, but I don't think He hears my prayers: there are no churches here.” (Pray for her relationship with Christ.)

From a viewer in Iran – “Security agents barged into two home churches, arrested four new Christians, and took all their belongings. Keep these four people in your prayers.”

From a man from a remote village in Iran – “I like to call you regularly. Sometimes I call to speak on the live shows; I like the way your presenters speak with the viewers who call. It shows that they care and that they do not care where someone is from or what education they have; they like to hear from all people. I watch all of your programs. I owe the changes in my life to SAT-7's programs; I don't have any other source, as I have no Christian friends and no Bible.”
(Message sent before the government blocked the social media platforms)