



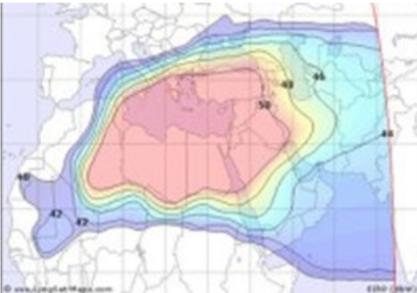
Press Release

First Christian TV on Egyptian Satellite

Nicosia, Cyprus – September 1, 2009

The latest media developments in the Arab World reveal an oscillation between contradictory trends shaping the freedoms and restrictions on Arabic Christian TV broadcasters. The broadcast charter adopted by Arab governments in a meeting in Cairo last year, seemed to pave the way for the curtailing of the relative freedom enjoyed by Arab satellite broadcasters. However, this is now offset by the unprecedented and unexpected developing news that one of the region's most popular satellite services from Egypt, Nilesat, has accepted an Arabic Christian station on its platform.

Arab Vision continues to monitor these developments, especially since some of its own Christian TV programs are reaching the Arab viewers through these broadcasts. "It's hard to predict what will happen next; we are seeing conflicting trends" commented Arab Vision's international director. "Obviously we are delighted that our TV programs - offering support to the Arab churches and addressing various societal needs - will now reach even more viewers through this popular satellite platform. But there are no guarantees for the longevity of these types of opportunities, and we remain concerned about a possible backlash in the days to come."



Some sectors of the Arab press are already criticizing the inclusion of the Christian station on Nilesat. An article in the Egyptian daily newspaper, Almasryoon, questions why the satellite administration officials are "insisting on broadcasting a Christian channel offending Islam and hurting millions of Muslims," especially during the time of Ramadan. The article condemns the decision to accept a Christian channel while rejecting an Islamic one: "Does the declaration that they will not broadcast religious channels apply to this Christian channel, especially when they rejected the Azhari Islamic Channel following the church objection?"

The [Azhari Channel](#), which traces its roots to the renowned and authoritative Sunni institution, Al-Azhar University, faced some opposition during the weeks leading up to its launch last month. The Egyptian government seemed intent on blocking the start of the channel, stressing that it is opposed to any religious channels originating from within its borders. Analysts explained this public stance of the government as an attempt to quell

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claims of religious favouritism, especially by Coptic Christians who have called the launch of Azhari divisive. It was not clear how this government impasse was resolved to give the new station the green light to proceed.

“The tit-for-tat political agendas of Arab governments and institutions will no doubt continue to drive the opportunities and restrictions in the Arab media world,” summarized Arab Vision’s director. “As long as there are openings, we want to continue producing good Arabic TV programs to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the millions of Arab men, women and children who have yet to hear the Good News.”

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