

# Radio Invites Arab World on 'Journey of Hope'

More than a year after “**Arab Spring**” upheavals began to oust governments in North Africa and shake up much of the Middle East, another wave of hope continues to sweep across the region.

Radio broadcaster HCJB Global is launching its “Journey of Hope” campaign on Thursday, showcasing a **media outreach** effort that offers a better future—and eternal destiny—for those still living amid social, political and cultural uncertainty.

HCJB Global has served the region for two decades, but unveiled its renewed effort this month at the National Religious Broadcasters convention in Nashville. Arabic-language programming is broadcast daily via satellite and shortwave radio, as well as some FM frequencies, and is streamed over the Internet.

A smartphone app also provides access to broadcasts, so the voices of the programmers can literally “travel alongside listeners,” as Jesus accompanied His disciples on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection. The organization adopted the Emmaus story from Luke 24:13-35 as “Journey of Hope’s” theme.

“The risen **Jesus** joined the travelers along that lonely road and helped them understand events that left them confused and uncertain,” says Wayne Pederson, HCJB Global president. “Journey of Hope broadcasters walk with Arabic speakers who yearn to understand who Jesus is.”

All “Journey of Hope” program producers are trained by HCJB Global and are native to the locations they serve. They create programming across North Africa and the Middle East secretly due to government and social hostility toward Christians and Christianity.

Being on the ground at the time “Arab Spring” got under way last year helped them engage listeners in the region, particularly through social networks, such as Facebook. Some “Journey of Hope” broadcasters stayed online for as long as 10 hours straight in what HCJB Global’s regional director, Lobito (pseudonym), called a “pre-evangelistic outreach” with their audience.

Christians are scarce in this part of the world. Less than 1 percent of the region’s 355 million people are believers, and an estimated 95 percent of people in the Arab World will never meet a Christian. Reports of **persecution against Christians** and churches, sometimes violent, have multiplied over the past year. Few individuals have access to the Bible or Christian literature, but those who seek hope and answers for life are discovering the message of Jesus from fellow travelers through HCJB Global’s broadcasts.

“We train our loyal partners to produce radio programs and give them the tools they need—portable stations, digital mixing and editing software,” said Lobito. “One producer was recently forced out of his own country to live secretly in another, but he continued to produce **Christian radio programming**. This producer has since fled again. HCJB Global is still trying to find him.”

Programming is tailored to specific groups—young families, men and women—as well as those who want to learn English. Many find a connection with the producers through the radio programs, which reach them in a way that the printed word can’t.

A recent independent media organization’s survey found more than 1.5 million people listen to HCJB Global’s broadcasts in the region each week. Listeners like “Amani” (pseudonym) spur the ministry’s renewed “Journey of Hope” passion to continue their radio outreach in North Africa and the Middle East.

"My friend Rashid (pseudonym) told me about your satellite radio station, and I began to listen. The music and programs about Jesus have made an important impact on my life, and now I listen to it regularly through my computer or phone. ... I feel empty spiritually and am at a crossroad. I am writing to you for help. Please send me the Holy Bible and some study materials that can help me and get me out of this lost feeling."