

Documenting history as it happens

For Jenan Moussa, a roving reporter from the Dubai-based Al Aan television station, the gravity of the journalistic profession really hit home while covering the Syrian uprising, in which she experienced just how dangerous and difficult her work can be. She also gained a better appreciation of how reliable satellite communications serve as an enabler for her to deliver breaking-news video footages when operating in hostile environments

Following a week-long reporting stint in the war-torn country, her team was making their journey across the heavily-guarded Syrian border when they encountered potential hostility. Warned by their guide to “keep on running if the soldiers start firing at us”, Moussa and her colleagues were instructed to make their way briskly through a narrow sand path – without realizing that they were actually running through a mine field.

“Even today, I still think about this incident a lot because I could have lost my legs or experienced a worse fate. Dangerous situations like these can make me think that I don’t want to do this job for a long time, as I am still young and I don’t want to die yet. But then I realize that there are not many people, especially not many Arabic women, who get to do this job. This gives me the strength to continue reporting and to be there when history is being made right in front of you,” Moussa explained.

Moussa’s work has taken her to some of the key focal points of the Arab Spring, including Libya, Egypt and now Syria. Her motivation stems from always wanting to find new ways and angles to tell the stories of ordinary people impacted by the instability, giving them the opportunity to voice their deepest fears and concerns.

She said: “The most powerful figures in this world – politicians, generals – can easily get their voices heard. But for ordinary people caught in war-torn regions, their stories often go unnoticed. I always try to find new stories, and would literally go through a burned-out building to find exclusive perspectives. Or I would spend days trying to find somebody who has an exclusive story to tell.”

A roving reporter at work

Reporting from conflict zones presents reporters with unique challenges. Apart from dealing with the potential dangers that lurk in hostile environments, they also face the difficulty of having to file their news story to meet deadlines in spite of the lack of a reliable Internet connection.

Moussa vouches for the essential role that mobile satellite technology plays in enabling journalists to conduct news reporting, especially in comparison to what’s possible a few years ago. The versatility and convenience provided by the Thuraya IP+ broadband terminal is in sharp contrast to what Moussa personally experienced in a 2006 assignment in Lebanon, where she had to travel back to the hotel room in order to have access to Internet connectivity.

“This can actually lead to a significant time lag, sometimes of up to 12 hours, between something that’s happening on the ground and the journalist being able to report it,” Moussa explained.

No substitute for reliable satellite communications

Seven years later, Moussa's current experience in Syria couldn't be more different. The Thuraya IP+ can be quickly and easily deployed to provide her team with the reliable transmission bandwidth to deliver breaking-news video footages in a highly secure manner. Thuraya's congestion-free network coverage further enables Moussa to always stay connected to her newsroom and provide instant news updates via social media channels such as Twitter.

Moussa said: "With my laptop connected to a Thuraya IP+ terminal, I have my own portable satellite Internet connection with me all the time. It doesn't matter where I go, it always works. Thuraya IP+ also allows me to upload the video content I have shot within minutes of arriving at the scene. What an invention – I love it!"

Another important benefit of satellite connectivity is that it allows Moussa to keep up with the demands of today's accelerated news distribution cycles.

"The instant a bombing takes place in Syria, I am able to pull out my Thuraya satellite phone, extend the antenna and achieve satellite connection in a matter of seconds. This is crucial as it allows me to send an SMS or update my Twitter account instantaneously while the bombs are exploding. Literally within seconds of an incident in Syria, the whole world will know what has happened," she added.

Staying safe with Thuraya

Moussa is also confident that she and her team can make use of Thuraya's satellite equipment to provide improved safety and security in critical situations.

"For instance, the Thuraya satellite handsets and terminals come with an in-built global positioning system (GPS), which we found to be incredibly helpful during trips into dangerous and isolated areas," Moussa said. "Once, we lost our way while travelling to Timbuktu, and it is thanks to the GPS that we managed to navigate our way safely through Mali, which at that time was a very dangerous and rough country to traverse."

Moussa believes her passion for shedding light on the world's less documented stories will continue to keep her and her colleagues motivated in covering current developments in the Middle East – with a little help from the advanced capabilities provided by Thuraya.

She concluded: "Being in these war-torn areas makes me appreciate my Thuraya equipment. When I am out in the field, they are the only connection I have to the rest of the world and the only means I have to get these stories out."