

About Al Arabiya



Al Arabiya, owned by the Saudi corporation Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC) and broadcasted directly out of Dubai, is considered to have been launched to provide a competitor to Al Jazeera. Together they currently represent the two largest Arab satellite channels, even though Al Arabiya seems to remain merely the “most watched second choice channel” (Hammond 2007).

It was launched in 2003, after 9/11 and in time to broadcast the second American invasion into Iraq. An English version has been launched in 2007 and was followed by Farsi and Urdu broadcasting in 2008. According to the channel itself, the English news version has been relaunched in November 2013, featuring a new design as well as a better video service, which offers fully searchable, subtitled clips from the Arabic TV station. Former Al Arabiya general manager Abdulrahman al-Rashed promoted news coverage more “balanced” than Al Jazeera, since the latter developed a sort of adversarial relationship with several states. Given this competition with Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya is often accused of being favourable to the Saudi family and too friendly towards Western interests. In order to control the flow of information in the Arab World, Saudi Arabia has been reported to conduct numerous instances of censorship or prosecution of newspapers and journalists from Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and GCC countries for unfavorable coverage of Saudi affairs.

Today Al Arabiya keeps up with Al Jazeera, focusing on social media and producing more and more interactive content. Although it should be noticed that, unlike Al Jazeera, the channel does not shy away from showing very graphic (and sometimes ethically questionable) video footage of actions of terrorist movements or casualties in countries under siege.

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