

# Prayer Alert

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As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a female servant look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God. (Psalm 123:2)

We are pleased to enclose this week's edition of Prayer Alert.

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Thank you again for standing with us in prayer over the nations.

David Fletcher – Editor

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## Praise Reports

### [Ghana: rescued from slavery](#)

Praise God for the rescue of an 18-year-old woman in Ghana who had been enslaved for years on Lake Volta. Forced to work in the fishing industry seven days a week, Elinam (not her real name) had endured physical abuse and was denied food if she did not work. She attempted, unsuccessfully, to escape several times, but last week police and International Justice Mission (IJM) were able to find her and bring her to a safe aftercare home where she can recover and heal from trauma. Pray for her continued healing and wellbeing.

Praise: God for the cooperation between IJM and the police in the rescue operation. Pray for Elinam's complete recovery. (Psalm 18:19)

More: [www.ijmuk.org/](http://www.ijmuk.org/)

### [UK government backs down over gambling machines](#)

The Government has been forced to bring forward its proposed changes to gambling machine betting limits. Philip Hammond had announced in his Budget speech that the maximum stake on fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBTs) would be cut from £100 to just £2 by October 2019, five months later than had been expected. After considerable protest, including the resignation of sports minister Tracey Crouch (see <https://www.prayer-alert.net/british-isles-ireland-pa-site/item/11140-minister-resigns-over-delayed-crackdown-on-betting-machines>), this change will now be put into effect by April 2019. James Mildred, for Christian charity CARE, said it was a 'stunning victory' against FOBTs, which are seen as highly addictive and damaging to families and mental health. However, he added: 'This is only the first step. The damaging effects of gambling are becoming more visible across society, and the Government must introduce legislation to tackle this. Unless change is forthcoming, it is going to be children who are losing out.'

Praise: God for this decision, which will give much more immediate help to those already addicted, or in danger of becoming addicted to gambling. (Isaiah 25:4)

More: [www.christiantoday.com/uk/christian-advocacy-group-welcomes-government-u-turn-on-gambling-machines/130948.htm](http://www.christiantoday.com/uk/christian-advocacy-group-welcomes-government-u-turn-on-gambling-machines/130948.htm)

### [Couple's 100 years of service](#)

A couple have been recognised for giving more than a hundred years of service to the Church of Scotland between them. Don and Alice Barrie have played key roles at a church in South Lanarkshire for 51 and 60 years respectively. On 4 November their church presented them with long service awards from the moderator of the CoS general assembly, at a special surprise party. Alice's father had insisted that she take music lessons from an early age; she took over as church organist at the age of 13 and has never looked back! Don became a church elder in 1967, and served as treasurer. As well as their church duties, the couple successfully ran a farm and raised five children. Their minister, Mike Fucella, said: 'Church in a rural situation like ours can at times be frustrating, with very few people to do a great deal of work. Don and Alice deserve a big thank you. They have served with cheerfulness, often willing to try new things - open to the future God has in store for us. Without their partnership in the Gospel, I would find things very difficult indeed.'

Praise: God for Don and Alice's dedication, and for many other 'unsung heroes' like them who make such a difference to their churches. (Hebrews 12:1-2a)

More: [churchofscotland.org.uk/news\\_and\\_events/news/2018/couple\\_honoured\\_for\\_giving\\_kirk\\_100\\_years\\_service](http://churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2018/couple_honoured_for_giving_kirk_100_years_service)

## British Isles & Ireland

### Embattled PM stands by draft Brexit agreement

On 15 November, the day after Theresa May persuaded her cabinet to endorse the draft EU agreement, two cabinet ministers (including Dominic Raab, the Brexit secretary) and three junior ministers resigned in protest, and Mrs May had to defend her actions against a chorus of criticism by MPs. At the time of writing her survival was far from certain. However, she resolutely defended the deal, saying, 'The course I have set out is the right one for our country and all our people. Am I going to see this through? Yes.' Meanwhile, Michel Barnier and his colleagues also have to ask the 27 EU members to approve the draft agreement, which might raise further difficulties. On 25 November, the draft deal will go to an EU summit, and in December it will need to be approved by Parliament. Given the degree of turmoil, your prayers are needed more than ever. To help you in this, you might want to use the declaration issued by Passion for the Nation, entitled 'The Mother of Parliaments'. [See http://passionforthenation.uk/](http://passionforthenation.uk/)

Pray: for Theresa May and all those involved in the Brexit process, that the best possible outcome will be brought about despite the current uncertainty. (1 Peter 5:7)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-46227046](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-46227046)

### Manchester bomber's brother to be extradited

The younger brother of the Manchester bomber Salman Abedi will be extradited to Britain before the end of the year, according to Fayed al-Sarraj, the Libyan prime minister. Hashem Abedi, 20, was arrested in Libya shortly after his older brother blew himself up at an Ariana Grande concert in the Manchester Arena on 22 May 2017, killing 22 people. In an interview, Mr Fayed said that Libya was working with British authorities. He added: 'I think from here to the end of this year we will finish all the legal procedure. We are fully cooperating because we understand the suffering of the families of the victims of this terrorist attack.' Greater Manchester police said that counter-terrorism officers had been granted a warrant for Hashem's arrest, and that the Libyan authorities were asked earlier this year to consider extraditing him to the UK. They believe they have enough evidence to charge him with the murder of 22 people, the attempted murder of others who were injured, and conspiracy to cause an explosion.

Pray: that this extradition will go ahead without any hitches. Pray also for improved relations between the UK and Libya. (Amos 5:24)

More: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/nov/14/libya-manchester-bomber-brother-hashem-abedi-extradited-this-year](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/nov/14/libya-manchester-bomber-brother-hashem-abedi-extradited-this-year)

### Christmas comes early at Lambeth

Lambeth Palace was transformed on 13 November when the front of the building was lit up with giant stars. This was part of the Church of England's new campaign, #FollowTheStar, which aims to encourage people to attend churches over Christmas. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who led the event, said: 'Christmas, for some, is a wonderful time - family, noise, friends and fun. For others it is isolated, or there are arguments; it just varies widely. #FollowTheStar is celebrating the fact that at the centre of Christmas it is Jesus who brings joy, healing hope and love, whatever situation you are in, and inviting others to share in that love. If you are a Christian, you might think about inviting someone to come to church with you. Church and a meal would be even better!' Thousands of services and events will be taking place in churches all over the country in the run-up to Christmas.

Pray: that many will indeed be encouraged to 'follow the star' this Christmas season, and discover what a difference Jesus can make in their lives. (Luke 2:10)

More: [www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Christmas-comes-early-for-Lambeth-Palace](http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Christmas-comes-early-for-Lambeth-Palace)

### Archbishop pays tribute to Prince Charles

In the House of Lords on 14 November, Archbishop Justin Welby congratulated Prince Charles on his 70th birthday and praised his 'lifelong dedication' to serving his country and his ongoing concern for young people, especially through the Prince's Trust. He added: 'There has been talk of meddling. In the Church we politely say "being prophetic". He has shown his prophetic instincts, not least in his welcome advocacy of the critical need to protect the environment. His Royal Highness has also been a leader in speaking out on the plight of persecuted Christians around the world, something for which I am most grateful. His deep confidence in his own personal faith has been a basis for, as he has put it, "building bridges across chasms". As the whole nation has seen, it is matched by his clear love for this country. We have united this year to celebrate his family's joys, and I am delighted to express the same joy on this occasion.'

Pray: that the commitment shown by Prince Charles will continue to be shown throughout the rest of his life. (Psalm 71:18a)

More: [churchinparliament.org/2018/11/14/archbishop-pays-tribute-to-hrh-the-prince-of-wales-on-his-70th-birthday/#more-16215](http://churchinparliament.org/2018/11/14/archbishop-pays-tribute-to-hrh-the-prince-of-wales-on-his-70th-birthday/#more-16215)

### London's pollution levels still unsatisfactory

Research published on 14 November shows that London's low-emission traffic zone has modestly reduced residents' exposure to diesel engine pollution, but the better air quality has not brought improved lung health among children. The results suggest that while air pollution levels may be reduced by low emission zones, extra measures are needed to deliver air clean enough to improve health. WHO says that in addition to the pollution problems caused by diesel vehicles, nitrogen oxide - which has been linked to asthma and impaired lung development in children - has become a major problem. Professor Chris Griffiths, who co-led the research, said, 'In many areas of London, air pollution still remains a major issue'.

Pray: for the Government to take this study seriously, and devise further measures to improve people's health in London (and other

major cities). (Isaiah 45:12)

More: [uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-pollution/low-emission-zones-improve-city-air-but-not-enough-study-idUKKCN1NJ38P](https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-pollution/low-emission-zones-improve-city-air-but-not-enough-study-idUKKCN1NJ38P)

### Suffragette mosaic in Birmingham

A giant mosaic (20 metres high), made up of thousands of photos of 'inspiring' women, has been unveiled. Depicting Hilda Burkitt, a militant suffragette, it is now on show at Birmingham New Street station, where she threw a stone at the prime minister's train in 1909. Named Face of Suffrage, the artwork includes 3,724 photos from the public, who had responded to an appeal by artist Helen Marshall. Ms Marshall said: 'The photo is the face of a smiling Edwardian lady, but her story is far from what we might expect.' Jailed for breaking a window of Herbert Asquith's train, Burkitt went on hunger strike and was force-fed 292 times while at Birmingham's Winson Green prison. Ms Marshall said she chose Burkitt as the subject of her piece after people she spoke to 'really seemed to connect' with the picture the mosaic is based on. It will be on display until 14 December, marking 100 years since some British women were allowed to vote in a general election for the first time.

Pray: for situations today where women are still regarded as second-class citizens, as we remember those like Hilda Burkitt who used all available means to battle for women's rights. (Genesis 1:27)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-46117128](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-46117128)

### Eco-friendly Christmas fair

On Saturday 1 December the Salvation Army's Fair Christmas Fayre, now in its eleventh year, will return to London's Oxford Street. It will feature over 25 unique stalls selling eco-friendly, fairtrade, upcycled, recycled and charity gifts and fashion. The fayre, which will give shoppers a chance to enjoy the sparkle of Christmas in a way that is fair for the world's poorest people and the planet, will be at Regent Hall, 275 Oxford Street - just a few metres from Oxford Circus. Organiser Hayley Still said: 'We are delighted once again to bring together a rich variety of ethical traders. The fayre offers shoppers the opportunity to buy high quality Christmas gifts, whilst also making a difference to the lives of others.'

Pray: for the success of this salutary reminder to Oxford Street shoppers that ethical and ecological issues are far more important than they might imagine. (Psalm 24:1)

More: [www.salvationarmy.org.uk/ethical-christmas-market-returns](https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/ethical-christmas-market-returns)

## Europe

### Bulgaria: freedom of Christians threatened

Christians in Bulgaria are facing the prospect of a new law that will severely restrict the freedoms currently enjoyed. The Religious Denominations Act was presented to parliament on 4 October 2018 and is due to be considered again on Friday 16 November. In a show of unity, thousands of Christians across towns and cities in Bulgaria have taken to the streets in peaceful protest and public prayer. Transform Europe Network's partners in Bulgaria are urging fellow-Christians from the UK, across Europe, and beyond to pray and make written representations to their MEPs, ambassadors, and Bulgarian government officials.

Pray: that the Bulgarian government will reconsider this restrictive legislation. (Psalm 106:3)

More: [www.ten-uk.org/new-law-threatens-freedom-of-christians-in-bulgaria/](https://www.ten-uk.org/new-law-threatens-freedom-of-christians-in-bulgaria/)

### Romania 'totally unprepared' for EU presidency

Klaus Iohannis, Romania's president, does not believe his country is ready to take over the rotating leadership of the EU on 1 January 2019. He said that 'things have gone off the rails' and there is a 'political necessity to replace the government', which he called an 'accident of democracy'. With the country facing political turmoil, Mr Iohannis has called for the Romanian government to step down instead. His remarks came after the European affairs minister Victor Negrescu, who was tasked with preparing for the EU presidency, unexpectedly resigned last week. Viorica Dancila is Romania's prime minister, but has little executive power. Liviu Dragnea, chairman of the ruling Social Democratic Party, effectively runs the government, but cannot be prime minister because of his previous convictions for fraud and election rigging.

Pray: that Mr Iohannis' remarks will be heeded, and that the political problems will be satisfactorily resolved. (Exodus 18:21)

More: [news.sky.com/story/romania-totally-unprepared-for-eu-presidency-says-countrys-own-leader-11552595](https://news.sky.com/story/romania-totally-unprepared-for-eu-presidency-says-countrys-own-leader-11552595)

## Worldwide

### Egypt: seven Christians killed in bus shooting

A terrorist attack on three buses carrying Egyptian Christians left at least seven dead and 19 injured on 2 November. The buses were travelling to a well-known Christian historical site near Minya. Six of the seven who died came from the same extended family. A number of news outlets reported that 'local IS affiliates' have claimed responsibility for the attack. In a similar attack at the same place by IS in May 2017, 29 Christians were murdered.

Pray: for the families of the deceased and for the injured. Pray also against these attacks. (Psalm 23:4)

More: [barnabasfund.org/en/news/seven-killed-in-egyptian-bus-shooting-targeting-christians](https://barnabasfund.org/en/news/seven-killed-in-egyptian-bus-shooting-targeting-christians)

### USA: fires in California - Paradise lost

Crews battling a deadly wildfire in northern California have managed to hold their containment lines, the state fire service says. They have contained 30% of the fire, stretching over 125,000 acres, but do not expect to complete the process till the end of November. The official death toll in the state currently stands at 59, with another 130 not yet accounted for. In the ruined town of Paradise, forensics teams are continuing to search for human remains. Many victims in the town are believed to have been elderly residents or people with mobility issues who would have found evacuation more difficult. President Donald Trump has paid tribute to the emergency crews' 'incredible courage in the face of danger'. He added, 'We mourn the lives of those lost, and we pray for

the victims.'

Pray: for the emergency services as they work at containing the fire. Pray that God will show His comfort to those affected, and for all who are assisting them. (Psalm 116:5)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-46201718](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-46201718)

### **Sudan: Christian converts arrested and tortured**

Sudanese security agents raided a house in the city of Nyala, and arrested 13 people when they admitted to being Christians. Two believers were released, but ten converts from Islam and their pastor, Tajdeen Yousif, were detained. The pastor refused to deny Christ despite being beaten by the agents, and the ten were later released after reportedly being tortured into recanting their faith. Pastor Tajdeen, also a convert from Islam, was held for several more days before being released. All eleven have now gone into hiding for their safety. Under sharia law, Muslims who abandon their religion face severe punishment. Sudan's constitution gives judicial discretion to courts in the application of sharia.

Pray: for Christians converted from Islam to be strong in their faith. Pray also for tolerance in countries such as Sudan, for all faiths to be able to live side by side. (Psalm 133:1)

More: [morningstarnews.org/2018/10/christians-in-darfur-sudan-arrested-during-combined-worship-of-house-churches/](http://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/christians-in-darfur-sudan-arrested-during-combined-worship-of-house-churches/)

### **India: Christian families persecuted**

Five Christian families in eastern India were at a service in October when they received a phone call telling them to return to their homes immediately. They rushed back, but found that the villagers had been incited by a tribal group (themselves influenced by Hindu extremists) to destroy one of their houses. The villagers were also told that they must drive out all the families. Threatened with expulsion from the village and with seizure of their farmland, three of the five families converted back to the tribal religion. This is just a sample of persecution in Hindu strongholds in India. Police appear to do little or nothing when Christians make a report.

Pray: for God to give the families protection from these attacks; may they know His presence with them. (Romans 8:35)

More: [morningstarnews.org/2018/11/tribal-leaders-join-hands-with-hindu-extremists-to-persecute-christians-in-jharkhand-india/](http://morningstarnews.org/2018/11/tribal-leaders-join-hands-with-hindu-extremists-to-persecute-christians-in-jharkhand-india/)

### **Uganda: Christian boy refuses to convert to Islam**

Radical Muslims left a 12-year-old Christian boy unconscious recently, after threatening to strangle him unless he converted to Islam. Emmanuel Nyaiti was walking to his grandmother's house 200 metres from his home in Moru village when four men ambushed him and took him to a plantation less than a mile away. The boy said he was able to identify two of the attackers. 'Ali Lukuman tried to persuade me to become a Muslim, which I refused, and he slapped me and I started screaming', Emmanuel said from his bed at Budaka Health Centre, his speech made difficult from strangulation. He was told, 'If you want to stay with us in our village, then you have to become a Muslim. If not, then you have to leave.' The assault was the latest of many which have been reported in eastern Uganda in the past six years. The country's constitution and other laws provide for religious freedom, including the right to propagate one's faith and convert from one faith to another. Muslims make up no more than 12 percent of the population.

Pray: for full recovery for Emmanuel, and that his attackers will face justice. (Hebrews 1:8)

More: [morningstarnews.org/2018/10/christian-boy-in-uganda-strangled-threatened-with-death-for-refusing-to-convert-to-islam/](http://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/christian-boy-in-uganda-strangled-threatened-with-death-for-refusing-to-convert-to-islam/)

### **Australia: needles in fruit**

On 13 November Clare Bonser, a make-up artist with ABC News Breakfast, was driving when she casually bit into her pear. She happened to look down before taking the next bite and spotted a needle, so that she avoided injury. Two days earlier, a Vietnamese woman was arrested and charged with seven incidents of contaminating strawberries with needles in Queensland. She had acted out of 'spite or revenge' against her Australian ex-boss at a Woolworths store. This was a massive hit to Australia's strawberry industry, as many brands had to get rid of their stock way before the end of season due to reports of needles being found in the red fruits. Up to 230 incidents have been reported nationwide.

Pray: that no further attacks will be perpetrated. Pray also that the Vietnamese woman will be challenged, changed and chastened. (Galatians 6:10)

More: [www.rt.com/news/443959-needle-pear-australia-contamination/](http://www.rt.com/news/443959-needle-pear-australia-contamination/)

### **Democratic Republic of Congo: UN concern before December elections**

The UN has raised the alarm over fighting in eastern DRC, warning that the violence could hamper next month's elections. Leila Zerrougui, a UN special representative, said that three provinces were most at risk. 'There is a potential for armed group interference in the elections', she said at a UN security council meeting. The area has been troubled for decades by inter-ethnic bloodshed and militia violence, a crisis that has escalated this year. DRC is also battling the worst Ebola outbreak in its history. These factors cast a shadow over the country's ability to stage elections on 23 December to succeed President Joseph Kabila.

Pray: for the Ebola outbreak to be contained and eradicated. Pray also for any inter-ethnic differences to be stabilised and for the election to go ahead without bloodshed. (Acts 1:26)

More: [www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/alarmed-fighting-dr-congo-december-elections-181114153123291.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/alarmed-fighting-dr-congo-december-elections-181114153123291.html)

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