

# Prayer Alert

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By day the Lord directs His love, at night His song is with me - the God of my life. (Psalm 42:8)

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

### [Sunday services allowed at secure unit](#)

Freddie O'Neil grew up in care, was abused by the system as a child, and became an adult not knowing what God, family and love are. He is now a convicted rapist based in the secure John Howard Centre. He found Jesus in prison and immersed himself in the Gospel, but when he was transferred to the centre he realised there were no Sunday services or any Christian input during the week. He said, 'I relied on this so much for my well-being that I raised the question, but they just laughed and ignored me.' Friday prayers for Muslims happened every week, so he asked the Christian Legal Centre for support. After letters, discussions, and threats of court proceedings, all Christian patients at the centre now have a Sunday communion service, and the centre allows them to exercise their faith in Christ. See also the article on 'Prisoners and faith communities' in the UK section.

Praise: God that appropriate Christian spiritual direction is now available to these prisoners. (Proverbs 30:5)

More: [www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/christian-patient-finally-allowed-sunday-services](http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/christian-patient-finally-allowed-sunday-services)

### [2020: Year of the Bible](#)

Bishop Efraim Tendaro, secretary-general of the World Evangelical Alliance, says he wants evangelicals across the world to read the Bible and reflect more, invest in the translation and publication of it, and ensure people in all walks of life can engage with it. Addressing thousands at a Global Youth Day in Manila, he said, 'Properly understood, the Bible points us to the Creator whose Word is true, righteous and endures for ever. We will highlight the importance of the Bible as the enduring foundation for fostering unity, freedom, development and quality of life today and for the years to come.' The year-long initiative will launch formally at the newly-built Museum of the Bible in Washington, with the backing of ministries such as Wycliffe Bible Translators, YWAM, American Bible Society, and Call2All.

Praise: God for the Good News of Jesus Christ advancing across the nations. (Matthew 24:14)

More: [www.premierchristianradio.com/News/World/2020-named-Year-of-the-Bible-for-worldwide-evangelicals](http://www.premierchristianradio.com/News/World/2020-named-Year-of-the-Bible-for-worldwide-evangelicals)

## British Isles

### [Declarations to change the UK in a Godward direction](#)

As we come into agreement with God's word to 'trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding', we decree and declare that every connection concerning government, trade, justice, security, and communication not set according to Heaven's perfect plan will shift in the Name of Jesus, that the United Kingdom will be positioned and related for His destiny in the days ahead (Proverbs 3:5). As Jesus said, 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for the catch', we declare that networks and relationships across God's people in this nation that have not carried life will be replaced and renewed, that the capacity to bring in the fullness of revival and Kingdom transformation that He is opening before us will be established. We declare that those Kingdom nets will be extended into other lands, preparing the way in which other nations will be blessed with His

salvation, His love and His power, in Jesus' name.

Pray: for God to bless all Europeans as He re-aligns nations. (John 1:16)

More: [passionforthenation.uk/declarations-to-change-a-nation-nations-2/](http://passionforthenation.uk/declarations-to-change-a-nation-nations-2/)

### 31 August: day of prayer for GB

Thousands will meet in the SSE Arena at Wembley on 31 August to worship, praise and pray for the Glory of God to fall on Great Britain. The Levites led Israel into battle with music, so praise and worship will set hearts on fire and prayer will bring the Glory of God and release the power of the Holy Spirit, inspiring prayers of faith for His Church and our nation to be revived, restored and renewed. For more information click the 'More' button.

Pray: for the Church to hear God's call to pray at such a time as this. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

More: [www.eurovision.org.uk/](http://www.eurovision.org.uk/)

### Will Boris back Israel?

Boris Johnson describes himself as a 'passionate Zionist' and recently said that wild horses wouldn't keep him away from visiting Israel as Britain's prime minister. His own Jewish ancestry reflects a legacy that he is immensely proud of. His great-grandfather was the Moscow-born son of a schmutter merchant (clothes trader). From refusing to boycott Israeli goods as Mayor of London through to his role as foreign secretary in the Balfour Declaration celebrations, Boris is a friend of Israel. But with new challenges ahead and Britain's longstanding foreign policy not always in its favour, the Jewish state needs not only friends but courageous advocates, prepared to stand with Israel in a world that is increasingly volatile towards it. The Iran deal, the protection of Jews in Britain, Palestinian terrorism, and strengthening bilateral ties with Israel are all matters of importance in Mr Johnson's inherited in-tray.

Pray: that he will be able to assist the UK's Jewish community against anti-Semitism, and make wise decisions as the UK stands with the USA against Iran. (Psalm 51:6)

More: [online.flipbuilder.com/pngw/kywr/mobile/index.html#p=9](http://online.flipbuilder.com/pngw/kywr/mobile/index.html#p=9)

### Government adviser wants Islamophobia blasphemy law

In the last hours of Theresa May's administration, the Government appointed Imam Qari Asim as an adviser on Islamophobia. Earlier this year he indicated that he would support laws banning speech that Muslims find offensive. He argued that although Muslims should obey the law of the land most of the time, he would like the law to accommodate Islamic ideas. For example, he would like to see polygamy legalised, and inheritance to favour male heirs in line with sharia principles. He also supports Islamic finance with its radical view that interest should be banned, and has backed Pakistani radical cleric Khadim Rizvi who supported the death penalty for Aasia Bibi. Although the government has ruled out adopting the Islamophobia definition, many believe his appointment raises even more concerns for free speech.

Pray: for Boris Johnson's new administration to revisit the process protecting free speech. (John 14:6)

More: [www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/islam/government-islamophobia-adviser-wants-islamic-blasphemy-law](http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/islam/government-islamophobia-adviser-wants-islamic-blasphemy-law)

### 4,000 attacks on emergency services staff

In a depressing snapshot of what the media are calling 'Wild West Britain', there were 4,129 attacks on police officers, hospital staff and prison officers in six months. That number should be significantly higher because 14 constabularies failed to provide figures. The introduction of new laws increasing the maximum sentence for common assault from six months to a year has done little to stem the rising tide of violence. The Metropolitan Police said the figures show that new laws designed to protect emergency workers are not working. 'Judges are not using their sentencing powers to the full. We want to see them handing down the maximum sentence and saying, "You have attacked an officer and this is what you are getting"'. It is the same with carrying a knife, which has a maximum sentence of four years. How many people have ever been given that?'

Pray: for God to enable Boris Johnson to tackle the violence gripping the country effectively. (Isaiah 60:18)

More: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7343089/More-20-emergency-workers-assaulted-day-line-duty.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7343089/More-20-emergency-workers-assaulted-day-line-duty.html)

### Army 40% under strength

Ministry of Defence data show that numbers in infantry units have consistently been falling over the past five years. Some UK combat regiments are operating at almost 40% less than their required strength, due to declining recruitment numbers. A quarterly report noted a 7.6% drop in army personnel on 1 January. Defence secretary Ben Wallace has been urged to address the issue. Tory MP Bob Seely criticised the firm Capita, which began managing recruitment for the MoD in 2012. He said, 'I'm afraid to say that Capita have not been a success. If you talk to people who are wanting to go into the Army, the most common way they describe it is shambolic and chaotic.' A Capita spokesperson said that they are in the middle of a re-set, which started last year but is already seeing excellent results.

Pray: for God to stretch His hand over the army, enabling them to meet all commitments to keep Britain safe. (Psalm 91:1,7,8)

More: [www.heraldsotland.com/news/17828913.army-combat-units-up-40-strength-due-falling-recruitment/](http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/17828913.army-combat-units-up-40-strength-due-falling-recruitment/)

### Prisoners and faith communities

The Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact) is a Catholic charity providing support for prisoners and their families, by helping people make a fresh start and minimising the harm caused by imprisonment. It removes barriers between prisoners and the outside world, and influences policy and legislation in most prisons in England and Wales. In a bid to crack down on crime, Boris Johnson wants to create 10,000 extra prison places and end automatic early releases of prisoners before they finish their sentences. However Pact believes that the key for successful rehabilitation comes from connections with faith communities. It says the PM's solution is

a plaster for a bullet wound: 'If young people carry knives, because they're frightened and others are carrying knives, they're not going to stop carrying a knife, because the sentence is going to be longer. They'll stop carrying a knife if they feel safe in their communities.' See <https://www.premierchristianradio.com/News/UK/Prisoners-need-faith-communities-not-longer-sentences-says-Christian-charity>

Pray: for wise allocation of funds into the prison system. (James 3:17)

More: [www.prisonadvice.org.uk/](http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/)

## Europe

### Russia: protests challenge Putin's dominance

President Putin's heavy-handed politics ahead of September elections have caused street protests for weeks. Russians are airing an array of grievances over economic stagnation and the Kremlin's geopolitical isolation. Putin has turned Russia into a powerhouse to be reckoned with for foreign policy makers, but living standards have fallen five years in a row. The 50,000 protesters who converged a mile from the Kremlin recently proved that a movement that started with protests over candidates being refused to register for municipal elections has turned into a platform for a wide swathe of political concerns - local and national. Average Russians are experiencing poverty, consumer borrowing has increased almost 50%, and food chains have introduced consumer loans for shoppers, allowing families to put food on the table. Putin's popularity is low, and social media have shown images of police beating generally peaceful protesters and detaining 2,000+ demonstrators. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ddsukfwts>

Pray: for trustworthy governance and authentic electoral candidates, and for poverty to end. (Romans 12:2b)

More: [www.wsj.com/articles/russia-protests-present-new-challenge-to-putins-dominance-11565556427](http://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-protests-present-new-challenge-to-putins-dominance-11565556427)

### Ukraine: 500+ churches join new Orthodox church

In seven months over 500 congregations have left the Russian-affiliated church to join a newly created Orthodox Church of Ukraine. As a result, the Russian church has lost almost 5% of its congregations, a relatively small fraction of the total but significant given how much resistance the Moscow patriarchate has sought to orchestrate against this movement. The map of the changes is also significant, with most recent changes in the centre and south of the country, not just in the west as was the case at first. Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, seen as 'first among equals' in the Orthodox Church, agreed to allow the creation of an independent church in Ukraine, which many had requested in response to Russia's 2014 annexation of the Crimea from Ukraine. President Trump's administration supports the new Ukrainian church.

Pray: for Ukraine's religious liberty to be filled with Holy Spirit truth, humility and justice. (Psalm 45:4)

More: [www.christianpost.com/news/over-500-churches-leave-russian-church-for-new-ukrainian-orthodox-church.html](http://www.christianpost.com/news/over-500-churches-leave-russian-church-for-new-ukrainian-orthodox-church.html)

## Worldwide

### Australia: Christian youth survey

Mission Australia is a Christian charity supporting disadvantaged families and children, fighting homelessness and issues around mental health and addiction. They have invited young people aged 15-19 to participate in a wide-ranging national survey. Last year's survey identified mental health as the top issue facing young Australians, with a rating of 43% (it was 34% in 2017 and 21% in 2016). The top three personal concerns in previous surveys were coping with stress, school or study problems, and mental health. The annual survey provides a valuable snapshot of where young people are and offers important insights that inform the work of charities, community groups and government decision makers.

Pray: for Christian organisations to be led by God as they work to meet the needs of today's youth. (Job 5:11)

More: [www.anglicannews.org/news/2019/08/australian-youth-survey-gives-young-people-a-voice-over-their-concerns.aspx](http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2019/08/australian-youth-survey-gives-young-people-a-voice-over-their-concerns.aspx)

### Syria: car bombing, stoning, rape and torture

In July at least eight people were injured outside a church by an IS car bomb, in an area held by the Kurdish YPG militia. On the same day in Afrin, on the border with Turkey, a bomb killed eleven civilians, including children, and injured others, some seriously. Homes were damaged in the explosion and subsequent fire. A few days earlier a retired Christian school teacher went missing from her home in a mainly-Christian village near Idlib. The next day her body was found nearby: she had been raped repeatedly, tortured, and stoned to death by Islamist militants linked to an rebel group in the area. Forensic investigation found that the barbaric ordeal had lasted for around nine hours before she finally died.

Pray: for the Lord to be a strong tower of protection, especially for women and girls. (Proverbs 18:10)

More: [barnabasfund.org/en/news/prayer-focus-update-august-2019#country1](http://barnabasfund.org/en/news/prayer-focus-update-august-2019#country1)

### Zimbabwe: governance crisis and church aid

Far from seeing reform after Robert Mugabe was toppled, the country has fallen into deeper crisis (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/10/zimbabwe-emmerson-mnangagwa-battle-to-survive>) as millions are 'reduced to paupers'. Power cuts from dawn to long after dusk are causing families to cook on firewood in almost total darkness. Monthly earnings barely cover two weeks' living expenses. With Mnangagwa things have gone from bad to worse with outlandish austerity measures causing 175% inflation. Multiple currencies replaced by another new Zimbabwe dollar, fuel subsidies cut, poor harvests, a cyclone and drought have compounded problems. The Zimbabwe Church is calling for the international community and the government to hear the cries of Zimbabwean families surviving on two meals a day and lacking life-saving medicine. UK aid agency CAFOD is asking for national dialogue, for all in authority to come together and address the current crisis as they do what they can to assist with food, clean water supplies, and seeds (70% of the population grow their own food).

Pray: for honest and wise political reform, and for international aid to ease the effects of drought and cyclone. (Psalm 34:17-19)  
More: [www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2019-08/church-responds-to-humanitarian-crisis-in-zimbabwe.html](http://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2019-08/church-responds-to-humanitarian-crisis-in-zimbabwe.html)

### **Hong Kong: one country two systems?**

Please pray for resolution between Hong Kong's pro-democracy people and China's government. After police firing as many rounds of tear gas in one day as during the entire months of June and July, a general strike, and days of disruptions at Hong Kong Airport, protesters are now being called terrorists and China's ambassador to the UK has warned that troops will intervene to restore order if necessary. Videos (<https://www.businessinsider.com/videos-chinese-military-vehicles-gather-in-shenzhen-hong-kong-protests-2019-8?r=US&IR=T>) show a massive number of Chinese military vehicles gathering along the border. Hong Kong has its own legal system, borders, and rights including freedom of assembly and free speech, which are all meant to be protected. But things are changing. Rights groups accuse China of meddling in Hong Kong with legal rulings that disqualify pro-democracy legislators; also, five Hong Kong booksellers and a tycoon disappeared, all eventually re-emerging in custody in China. Artists and writers are under increased pressure to self-censor.

Pray: for Hong Kong to be allowed to keep its high degree of independence of one country amid communist government and democratic lifestyle. (Galatians 5:1)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-48607723](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-48607723)

### **Algeria: churches being closed**

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) has called on Algerian authorities to guarantee freedom of worship to churches and religious institutions, and to allow all closed churches to re-open. A press release on 12 August states, 'We deeply regret that in May and in August 2019 two churches were forcibly closed in the city of Boudjima. This brings the number of forcibly closed churches to six, including one house church. Five of them belong to the Protestant Church of Algeria, a WEA member. Many more churches are threatened with closure, amid denial of formal registration and recognition by authorities. We also call on the Algerian authorities to suspend and revise the February 2006 ordinance setting out the conditions and rules for the exercise of non-Muslim religions. This ordinance is cited in each of the decisions to close churches.'

Pray: for the Algerian authorities to respond to WEA's appeal and uphold religious freedom. Pray also for peace and prosperity for this country. (Isaiah 54:14,15)

More: [worlddea.org/news/4956/wea-appeals-to-algeria-to-re-open-forcibly-closed-churches](http://worlddea.org/news/4956/wea-appeals-to-algeria-to-re-open-forcibly-closed-churches)

### **Afghanistan: radical Islamists recruit at universities**

Since IS was driven out of Iraq and Syria, it appears to have its sights set on Afghanistan. While the Afghan government is engaged in peace talks with the hard-line Taliban movement, radical Islamist groups are spreading their ideology at universities. Basira Akhtar, a 22-year-old student, was beaten up twice earlier this year, at her university in Kabul, when her headscarf slipped from her head. In both cases she was accused of promoting Christianity. An Open Doors analyst says, 'The core of IS militants in Afghanistan consists of many disgruntled Taliban splinter groups and, reportedly, some returning fighters from Syria. They will try to attack in Afghanistan, just like the Indonesian couple who bombed a cathedral in the Philippines in January. For Christians, this basically means that they need to continue to keep their faith hidden as much as possible.'

Pray: for God to protect the people from IS as they attempt worldwide jihad and the Taliban's deadly bomb attacks; may there be peace in Afghanistan. (Proverbs 6:16-19)

More: [www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2019/08/afghanistan-radical-islamist-groups-recruit-at-universities/](http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2019/08/afghanistan-radical-islamist-groups-recruit-at-universities/)

### **Kazakhstan: officials harass churches**

Officials are harassing founders of religious communities, possibly trying to block applications to exist. In May police began harassing Oskemen's New Life Protestant Church as it sought re-registration after changing its name. Officers visited parishioners late at night, threatening one woman in her late 70s. People who give their names as founders of religious organisations applying for legal status continue to face harassment and intrusive questioning. Against international law, Kazakhstan bans all exercise of freedom of religion and belief without state permission. The UN Human Rights Committee states, 'No one can be compelled to reveal his thoughts or adherence to a religion or belief.' A church member said, 'At present the founders do not think that their rights are being protected by the law or its representatives. We are being subjected to pressure, which cannot help but arouse concern about the right to freedom of conscience in Kazakhstan.'

Pray: for God to protect people who are denied their rights to freedom of conscience. (Romans 14:8)

More: [www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2500](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2500)

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