

# Prayer Alert

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**Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)**

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

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Thank you for partnering with us in praying for the nations.

Blessings,

David Fletcher and the Prayer Alert Team

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## Praise Reports

### Slaves rescued

Recently the Ghana police, working with the department of social welfare and IJM, rescued nine children and arrested five suspects. We are thankful to the resilient and brave team who made this rescue possible. Please pray for further Ghana rescues. Four Filipino children were also rescued thanks to another multi-agency effort led by the Philippines Women and Children Centre. One suspect, believed to be a child's relative, was arrested. Finally in South Asia ten people, including children, were rescued from bonded labour at a brick kiln.

Praise: God for all the hard work put in by agency partnerships that are seeking to reduce slavery. (Psalm 82:3-4)

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

### Girls' homes give hope

Imagine a young girl being turned out into the streets, all alone, because she is too old to stay at the orphanage. Many of these orphans end up as victims of human trafficking and are sold into sex slavery. Many languish and suffer there for years with no hope of a better life. Stella's Houses are homes for orphan girls who have been aged out of state-run facilities and are prime targets for sex traffickers. While living at a Stella's House, the girls complete their education, learn life skills, and grow in an environment that changes their mind-set from 'I am just an orphan' to 'I am worthy of being loved'. Instead of becoming a child trafficking statistic, these children are loved and given a chance for a safer life.

Praise: God for these homes; may they prosper and multiply. (Psalm 71:5)

More: [stellasvoice.org.uk/about](http://stellasvoice.org.uk/about)

### Egypt: Christians candidates in election

A record number of Christians (108) are standing for election in the Egyptian elections being held between 24 October and 8 November. These Christians are on the four party lists, contesting 284 seats allocated to political parties in the parliament. There have been continuous positive messages from President Sisi to protect Egypt's Christian community, one of the oldest and largest Christian communities in the region. In previous elections, Christian candidates were barred from running or forced to withdraw due to threats of violence. Attacks and pressure on Copts continue in rural areas, but this positive development is very welcome.

Praise: God for maintaining His presence in Egyptian politics and society. May He bring further spiritual freedom through Christians in Egypt's parliament. (1 Peter 2:5)

More: [www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/10/egypt-christians-participate-parliament-elections-muslims.html](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/10/egypt-christians-participate-parliament-elections-muslims.html)

## British Isles

### University chaplains organise 'walk and talk' events

Cardiff university chaplains decided to organise 'walk and talk' sessions after other events were cancelled due to the Covid lockdown and a decision not to allow people from areas of the UK with high levels of coronavirus to visit. Rev David Sheen said that this academic year is more stressful for students than usual, particularly new students who would normally be able to socialise widely and meet new friends but are currently restricted in what they can do. Many are missing home, family, and pets, The 'walk and talk' events provide some sort of normality, with the opportunity to talk to chaplains, meet others, have some fresh air, and enjoy being with the dogs they are walking. Self-isolating students are invited to join the chaplains' daily Zoom 'bring your own coffee' and 'drop-in chat'.

Pray: for God to bless the various creative initiatives being organised by chaplains in different universities. (Acts 1:8)

More: [premierchristian.news/en/news/article/university-chaplains-start-new-walk-and-talk-event-to-help-relieve-covid-stress](https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/university-chaplains-start-new-walk-and-talk-event-to-help-relieve-covid-stress)

### Love - a word used sparingly in politics and freely in music

Politics is concerned with serving the common good, weighing and developing solutions, stewarding resources in the public interest; music touches our experiences, tastes and emotions. Boris Johnson's description of the NHS as 'powered by love' following his recovery from coronavirus was notable in its departure from this pattern. His tribute conveyed something out of the ordinary, reflecting an insight derived not from briefings or expert analysis, but through relationship and direct personal experience. Churches have more in common with music than politics. The greatest Christian commandments have to do with love for God and for other people. One expression of love is kindness, which we have seen in abundance during the coronavirus pandemic. Martin Luther King Jr said, 'Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.'

Pray: for this season of change to transform society's structures to reflect justice and compassion in our economy, housing market, benefits system, and employment conditions. (Galatians 6:2)

More: [www.christiansinparliament.org.uk/latest/nppb-blog-can-love-power-the-change-we-need-the-trussell-trust/#more-1744](https://www.christiansinparliament.org.uk/latest/nppb-blog-can-love-power-the-change-we-need-the-trussell-trust/#more-1744)

### Brexit talks to resume

Talks between UK and EU Brexit negotiators entered an 'intensified phase' on 22 October after Brussels said both sides would be required to compromise on trade issues. Michel Barnier offered an olive branch to Lord Frost as the deadline for a deal looms. Number 10 acknowledged that 'significant gaps' remain between the two sides, and it was 'entirely possible that negotiations will not succeed'. Meanwhile, according to the Home Office, EU criminals could be barred from entering the UK when freedom of movement ends next year. However questions remain as to how the criminal history of travellers will be checked if the UK loses access to EU crime databases at the end of the Brexit transition period, as no agreements have yet been reached.

Pray: for God to give each person involved in the negotiations spiritual wisdom and insight as they seek to make decisions which are right and benefit the people of this country. (Ephesians 1:17a)

More: [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-news-live-eu-no-deal-barnier-boris-johnson-manchester-lockdown-latest-today-b1219697.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-news-live-eu-no-deal-barnier-boris-johnson-manchester-lockdown-latest-today-b1219697.html)

### Prayer for government and monarchy

The following is based on a prayer by Passion for the Nation. 'Father, we ask for a fresh alignment of the words and thoughts of our leaders, local and national, with Your will, that in these days, ancient divisions from nation to nation, or region to region, will decrease, and necessary changes will take place. Please release healing into the North / South divide. We ask forgiveness for the words that have been spoken from offence, fear or anger, and we ask for a spirit of reconciliation, that longstanding wounds caused by political decisions or inequalities of lifestyle will not be exacerbated by current issues. Now Lord, we thank You for the life of our Queen, Elizabeth II, and her heart for You and her people and for the wisdom, righteousness and integrity reflected in her life. In this pandemic season we ask for your protection, strength and health for her and Prince Philip and for other members of the royal family.'

Pray: for the secular attitudes of this nation to give way to the higher call upon this land. (Genesis 12:2)

More: [passionforthenation.uk/government-and-monarchy](https://passionforthenation.uk/government-and-monarchy)

### Abortion: day of prayer

On 27 October Christians will pray for the unborn children who will not reach their God-given potential. Since 1967 9.5 million babies have been aborted in the UK. Every three minutes, a precious life is destroyed. Our nation has one of the most liberal abortion laws in Europe. Pray for the Church to make her voice heard for the lives of our youngest ones. Cry out that she will have God's heart on this issue, for deep repentance, and a compassionate, decisive move to stop this evil from spreading further in our land. Pray for workers providing abortion to have a change of heart and mind. <https://www.worldprayer.org.uk/blog/day-of-prayer-about-abortion> Also the pro-abortion argument has raged for over a century. Offensive pro-abortion slogans include, 'What makes you religious fanatics think you can tell me what to do with my uterus?' Pray for communities to recognise infant loss and heart-break that follows abortion.

Pray: for boldness and courage for pro-life politicians to oppose the long-term practice of home abortions, and for their voices to be heard on all issues relating to abortion. (Proverbs 31:8-9)

More: [www.hli.org/resources/shouldnt-women-able-control-bodies/](https://www.hli.org/resources/shouldnt-women-able-control-bodies/)

### Universities face 'funding cuts' if they don't adopt anti-Semitism definition

Education secretary Gavin Williamson has urged British university vice-chancellors to adopt the international definition of anti-Semitism. He warned them that he would act if 'the overwhelming majority' of universities had not adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism by the end of the year; they could even have 'funding streams' suspended. He said it was disturbing that a recent survey by the Union of Jewish Students showed only 29 out of 133 universities had adopted the IHRA definition, and 80 said they had no current plans to do so. Mr Williamson said, 'The repugnant belief that anti-Semitism is somehow a less serious, or more acceptable, form of racism has taken insidious hold in some parts of British society. I am quite clear that universities must play their part in rooting out this attitude and demonstrating that anti-Semitism is abhorrent.'

Pray: for this generation of youth to recognise and reject anti-Semitism. (Romans 10:12)

More: [www.cufi.org.uk/news/universities-face-funding-cut-ultimatum-if-they-refuse-to-adopt-anti-semitism-definition/](http://www.cufi.org.uk/news/universities-face-funding-cut-ultimatum-if-they-refuse-to-adopt-anti-semitism-definition/)

## Europe

### Bulgaria: protests calls for corrupt PM to resign

In response to protests which began on 9 July, Boyko Borisov proposed reforms to the constitution which have been decried by protesters as a means of keeping his government in power until the next elections. Rallies have been mostly peaceful, but there have been occasional clashes with police and some arrests. Transparency International ranks Bulgaria as the most corrupt of the 27 nations in the EU. The economy is said to be one of the poorest in Europe, mainly due to corruption. A 2019 report on corruption in Bulgaria said that at least 35% of public procurement contracts involve corrupt practices. Currently the European Parliament is discussing the ongoing anti-corruption protests, after some of the movement's leaders sent letters to Brussels requesting support, but the Bulgarian government isn't backing down. See <https://www.euronews.com/2020/10/17/bulgaria-protests-enter-100th-consecutive-day-as-demonstrators-denounce-widespread-corrupt>

Pray: for Borisov's government to graciously resign so that free and fair elections can take place. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

More: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6-7MtSgR6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6-7MtSgR6s)

### Republic of Ireland: move to higher Covid restrictions

The Taoiseach has said that despite introducing what was probably 'Europe's strictest regime' it was not enough to reduce levels of infection significantly. So for the next six weeks people must stay at home. Those who can work from home must do so. People can meet outdoors with one other household. No social or family gatherings are allowed in homes or gardens. Pray for peace of mind to replace loneliness. Caring and compassionate visits can continue. Those living alone or parenting alone will be able to pair with another household as part of a 'support bubble'. People may stay away from home for exercise within a 5km limit. Non-essential shops and all hairdressers must close, and bars and restaurants are limited to takeaway services. Pray for safe social distancing, and for optimism for the future to replace anxiety. Pray also for small businesses on the edge of bankruptcy as they plan for a bleak financial future.

Pray: for God to minister through His churches as they support their congregations and communities in the weeks leading up to Christmas. (2 Peter 1:10)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54596783](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54596783)

## Worldwide

### China: prayer needs

Mission organisations say that the church is the largest social force in China not controlled by the Communist Party, and the Communist government prohibits large meetings and non-communist social media sites. They are also 'rewriting' the Bible to reflect the government's communist worldview. Ask God to bless church leaders with supernatural wisdom and increased unity with one another (1 Corinthians 1:10). Ask Him to move powerfully in the lives of the victims of flooding that displaced millions and killed hundreds recently. Pray for the young generation of Chinese to experience a hunger for truth and freedom that leads them to salvation (Luke 6:21). Also hospitals in Xinjiang Province must abort and kill all babies born in excess of its mandated family planning restricting ethnic minorities to three children including full-term new-borns. In addition to forced birth control and sterilisation, religious minorities are subject to massacres, internment camps, torture, organ harvesting, and disappearances. See <https://ausprayernet.org.au/china-orders-hospitals-to-abort-babies-of-religious-and-ethnic-minorities/>

Pray: for the church to continue to grow in number and vision to reach the nation with the Gospel, regardless of persecution. (Luke 19:10)

More: [www.windowreporter.com/pttw](http://www.windowreporter.com/pttw)

### USA: Over 1,600 faith leaders back Biden

Practising Christian Joe Biden, the Democratic presidential candidate, has been endorsed by the largest group of clergy in modern history. His endorsements mainly come from Catholics, evangelicals and mainline Protestants, including Billy Graham's granddaughter Jerushah Duford, former US ambassador for religious freedom Susan Johnson Cook, Michael Kinnamon, former general secretary of the National Council of Churches, and former gay episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson. 'This record-breaking group of endorsers shows that President Trump's lack of kindness and decency is energising faith communities and will cost him this election', said the director of the Christian campaign organisation Vote Common Good, which compiled the endorsements. Anti-abortion Republicans defecting from Trump are voting for Biden this year. Four years ago, religious voters looked the other way to give Trump a chance, but after witnessing his cruelty and corruption, a growing number are turning away from him. Biden has frequently spoken of how his faith has sustained him through challenging times.

Pray: for just and compassionate governance with a balanced agenda for the good of all people. (Psalm 45:4)

More: [www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/oct/09/faith-leaders-back-biden-evangelicals-trump](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/oct/09/faith-leaders-back-biden-evangelicals-trump)

### Syria: Centres of Hope

Centres of Hope are Christian schools open to anybody regardless of faith background. They want to show Jesus's love to the community, and they don't attach conditions to entry. But they do want to make sure that they show Jesus as the real source of hope. Young children and teenagers do separate activities. The young ones dance and sing songs about Jesus and watch biblical stories and funny sketches by staff. The teenagers watch a Christian movie and then discuss it. But like everywhere, Syria has taken measures to prevent coronavirus spreading. Many centres temporarily closed, and staff refocused efforts towards humanitarian and emergency aid. Now the centres are re-opening, and they are praying that they will reach even larger numbers of children to show them the love of God and to tell them the good news of salvation.

Pray: for even more families to have a hunger to explore the sacrificial faith of Christianity through this ministry and follow God's plan for their lives. (Jeremiah 29:11)

More: [www.opendoorsuk.org/news/latest-news/latakia-centre-of-hope/](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/latest-news/latakia-centre-of-hope/)

### **Nagorno-Karabakh: failed ceasefire and fake news**

Fighting continues despite an agreed ceasefire; the Red Cross reports 'hundreds killed' in the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkey and Israel are offering drone support and technologies. Azerbaijan wants to gain control of as much of its claimed territory as possible. Armenians have mobilised to stop it. The Red Cross reports indiscriminate shelling by both sides into towns and cities far from contested areas. On 21 October Russian bombers made a powerful air strike on a convoy and assembly point with Syrian mercenaries in Nagorno-Karabakh (<https://bulgarianmilitary.com/2020/10/21/russian-bombers-destroyed-a-mercenary-assembly-point-with-powerful-air-strike-video>). However researchers found old video footage re-edited and wrongly labelled as portraying recent events. While the majority of online media is news reports, official government information or campaign slogans and images, there is doctored or old footage. Disinformation in conflicts is not uncommon, where accessing accurate information can prove difficult (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54614392>). Pray for peace in this part of the Caucasus: it's a crisis entangling Russia, Turkey, Israel, Iran, and Azeri and Armenian diasporas.

Pray: for an immediate ceasefire, and for moral courage by leaders of both countries and their external backers to find compromises and solutions to this conflict. (Romans 12:18)

More: [www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/20/nagorno-karabakh-ceasefire-under-severe-strain-after-new-fighting](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/20/nagorno-karabakh-ceasefire-under-severe-strain-after-new-fighting)

### **Global: Covid relief funds corruption**

Nearly half of world exports come from countries that fail to punish foreign bribery. That's half of G20 countries and eight of the top 15 global exporters. Since 2018, fewer countries have been actively working against foreign bribery. One obstacle to enforcement is shell companies which cover up payments, making it difficult for authorities to trace the origin and destination of money. But even when countries actively enforce against foreign bribery, victims' compensation is rare and most proceeds of corruption are never returned to countries or citizens. Citizens of countries where multinationals bribe public officials pay higher prices than they otherwise would for possibly lower-quality goods and services. Public money wasted on unnecessary contracts and deals deprives people of essential services like education and healthcare. The EU's seven-year budget for Covid-19 recovery funds are at risk of abuse unless open, data-driven mechanisms to protect public contracts are put in place.

Pray: for G20 finance ministers, Amnesty International and Transparency International to successfully empower watchdogs to protect Covid relief funds. (Proverbs 20:17)

More: [more.transparency.org/webmail/853323/66360541/7cc01848a39e115e67ac3f922d8aec3667b769276e72c81c3c6d4202155ce777](https://more.transparency.org/webmail/853323/66360541/7cc01848a39e115e67ac3f922d8aec3667b769276e72c81c3c6d4202155ce777)

### **Nigeria: police shoot anti-brutality protesters**

On 21 October Lagos police opened fire on protesters after twelve days of demonstrations against police brutality. The shootings took place at a toll gate after Lagos officials had imposed a 24-hour curfew on 20 million people in a bid to bring the protests to an end. But the demonstrations against the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) show little sign of slowing down. SARS should tackle robbery, kidnappings and other violent crime, but has been widely criticised for human rights abuses including torture, extortion and extrajudicial killings. Plain clothes police officers frequently target young men with tattoos, dreadlocks, and expensive cars arbitrarily. The Nigerian army has tweeted out stills of news reports about the 'alleged' shootings with the words 'fake news' plastered across them in red letters. However, Amnesty International said there is disturbing credible evidence that they actually took place. See also <https://us12.campaign-archive.com/>

Pray: for President Muhammadu Buhari to establish economic and social justice, and honour his promise to disband SARS. (Proverbs 24:24-25)

More: [news.sky.com/story/end-sars-nigerian-police-open-fire-on-protesters-in-lagos-after-12-days-of-anti-police-brutality-demonstrations-12109649](https://news.sky.com/story/end-sars-nigerian-police-open-fire-on-protesters-in-lagos-after-12-days-of-anti-police-brutality-demonstrations-12109649)

### **Afghanistan: a gloomy future**

Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the Taliban Government refusing the USA's demand for them to surrender Osama bin Laden, the longest war in US history began, killing 3,500 coalition soldiers and 110,000 Afghans. A Taliban insurgency continues, and its forces now control nearly 20% of Afghan territory. Almost half the land is 'contested', and the Taliban is stronger today than at any time since the war began. A large-scale US effort to defeat the Taliban would prove costlier than the American public (and therefore any president) is willing to bear. In February 2020 the Taliban agreed to stop their attacks on coalition forces and Afghan civilians, and the USA and NATO agreed to remove their forces by May 2021. Once that happens, there will be nothing to prevent civil war because Pakistan, India, Russia, Iran and others will back their own proxies. Nobody wants a vacuum of power in the country.

Pray: for all nations directly involved or involved by proxy to enter into long-term plans to end the war. (Matthew 5:38)

More: [us12.campaign-archive.com/?e=2b376728db&u=7404e6dc8018f49c82e941d&id=8f5bd88584](https://us12.campaign-archive.com/?e=2b376728db&u=7404e6dc8018f49c82e941d&id=8f5bd88584)

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