

# Prayer Alert

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**I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With Him at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. (Psalm 16:8)**

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

You may like to explore our new online [Prayer Alert Prayer Wall](#) where we can add our own prayers and praise, interactively. We trust that you will find this helpful and encouraging, as we pray from our homes during lockdown.

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

Blessings,

David Fletcher and the Prayer Alert Team

## Praise Reports

[Bold Afghan Christians share gospel with Taliban](#)  
[Afghanistan insight: twenty years of evangelism](#)

## British Isles

[Afghanistan: warnings and explosions at airport](#)  
[100+ churches help Afghan refugees](#)  
[Extinction Rebellion protests](#)  
[Lockdown screen time ruining children's sight](#)  
[More Covid cases this summer than in 2020](#)  
[Paralympics disability awareness](#)  
[Princess Beatrice refreshingly honest about her dyslexia](#)

## Europe

[Luhansk: Christian books officially labelled extremist material](#)  
[Ireland: lifting Covid-19 restrictions 'as quickly as possible'](#)

## Worldwide

[Syria/Iraq: water crisis for millions](#)  
[Afghanistan: rescuing refugees](#)  
[Argentina: profound anti-Semitism](#)  
[Afghanistan: anti-Taliban resistance group](#)  
[Iran: prisons chief apologises](#)  
[Haiti: gangs complicating earthquake relief efforts](#)  
[Taiwan: homegrown vaccine criticised](#)

## Praise Reports

### [Bold Afghan Christians share gospel with Taliban](#)

Incredibly, many believe Afghanistan has the second-fastest growing church in the world, next to Iran. There are reports of Afghan Christians choosing to stay and share the gospel, saying, 'we don't care, we're here because we love this nation, we love our people, and we're going to share the gospel regardless, even if it means losing our lives.' In one village that was taken over a few weeks ago, the Christians started sharing Bible stories with the Taliban, some of whom have been studying the Bible and praying. They haven't made a confession of faith yet but seem very interested. The fearless nature of these believers reminds us of those in the Book of Revelation: 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. They did not love their lives unto death.' We are seeing this in real time.

Praise: God for this powerful demonstration of the Christian character. May God anoint the Christians left in Afghanistan with the same boldness and protection. (Matthew 10:28a)

More: [www.godreports.com/2021/08/bold-afghan-christians-sharing-the-gospel-with-taliban/](http://www.godreports.com/2021/08/bold-afghan-christians-sharing-the-gospel-with-taliban/)

### [Afghanistan insight: twenty years of evangelism](#)

The past twenty years in Afghanistan's history have seen the birth of a Spirit-filled Church. God has been anointing Christians to grow in maturity and numbers. In twenty years thousands of Muslims have converted to Christianity. Linguists have translated the Bible into various languages, and missionaries have taken God's Word to unreached people groups. Many believe that this mission work and evangelism have been preparing and strengthening the nation for the years ahead in what looks to be a new season. In 2021 the world has become aware, like never before, of the number of Christians in Afghanistan and now, sadly, the danger they are in. This has led to mighty waves of much-needed prayer and financial support being released for our Afghan brothers and sisters, at a time when they desperately need it. See also the praise article 'Bold Afghan Christians share gospel with Taliban'.

Praise: God for the way the light of Christ becomes brighter as His church goes underground. (John 8:12)

More: <https://www.runministries.org>

## British Isles

### [Afghanistan: warnings and explosions at airport](#)

Shortly after UK armed forces minister James Heappey had warned of an imminent terror attack, and had called on those queuing outside Kabul airport to move to safety, two explosions rocked the area on 26 August, leaving a number of casualties and throwing evacuation efforts into more turmoil, days before President Joe Biden's deadline for the USA to leave the country. At least 13 people including children were killed and many others were injured in what Taliban sources described as a suicide attack. Defence secretary Ben Wallace said a 'better option' for fleeing Afghans would be to travel across the land border. Christian charity CARE said that the current situation in Afghanistan is a recipe for a human trafficking disaster. Afghan women, fearful of life under new political leadership and aware of attacks on their rights, will want to escape oppression and may, in desperation, turn to illegal means of leaving the country. Many who are promised a better life will end up falling into modern slavery, whether that means commercial sexual exploitation, forced labour, or domestic servitude. [See](#)

<https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/afghan-refugees-at-risk-of-exploitation-warns-christian-charity>

Pray: for western governments and NGOs who stay on the ground to protect the vulnerable and prevent people from being exploited by traffickers or murdered by the Taliban or IS. (John 17:15)

More: [www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/afghanistan-news-live-taliban-us-uk-b1908930.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/afghanistan-news-live-taliban-us-uk-b1908930.html)

### 100+ churches help Afghan refugees

Over 100 churches have joined forces to help Afghan refugees settle in the UK. Christian charities Welcome Churches and the Hospitality Pledge are encouraging churches to join them in supporting refugees - particularly in areas where the resettlements will be. Dr Krish Kandiah, founder of adoption charity Home for Good and leader of the Hospitality Pledge project, said, 'It has been so amazing to see churches step forward and get involved. We have identified some of the regions where resettlement hotels will be and are working with the Home Office to provide practical support.' People arrive with very little, and lightweight clothing - they are cold, even in summer. Churches are sourcing clothing and prams, but the biggest need is accommodation. Groups of 100 are put in hotels, not the best place for families. Dr Kandiah hopes to utilise Christian retreats and conference centres for families, and has launched an emergency Afghan fund.

Pray: for God to give His churches all they need to enable them to take care of and provide for the homeless, mentally scarred, lonely and vulnerable immigrants. (Titus 3:14a)

More: [premierchristian.news/en/news/article/over-100-churches-mobilise-to-help-afghan-refugees-settle-in-the-uk](https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/over-100-churches-mobilise-to-help-afghan-refugees-settle-in-the-uk)

### Extinction Rebellion protests

Activists have begun two weeks of London protests 'targeting the root cause of the climate crisis'. On 24 August protesters lined London streets with placards, waved banners and erected obstacles to disrupt and block roads around Westminster. They blocked off roads, glued themselves to a giant table, and formed a human chain around the area cordoned off by police. Dozens were carried to police vans by officers who used loudspeakers to warn the crowd to leave or risk arrest. At least 10,000 people congregated near the rallies; by 26 August 196 people had been arrested. The group's co-founder gave a speech expressing solidarity with nations disproportionately affected by climate change. Pray for all the police forces to respond appropriately and proportionately to protest activity in the next fortnight, and for a workable policing plan.

Pray: for Londoners to be able to go safely about their daily lives, and for the Government to implement realistic climate policies. (Psalm 32:7a)

More: [news.sky.com/story/extinction-rebellion-police-responding-to-protesters-who-have-blocked-roads-around-westminster-12389369](https://news.sky.com/story/extinction-rebellion-police-responding-to-protesters-who-have-blocked-roads-around-westminster-12389369)

### Lockdown screen time ruining children's sight

Optometrists across the country say they are diagnosing higher numbers of children with short-sightedness (myopia) since the start of the pandemic. They put this down to less time spent outside due to Covid restrictions, more time spent looking at computer screens, and a drop-off in numbers of eye tests. The College of Optometrists is calling for parents to get their children to play outside for two hours a day, as this has been proved to prevent or stop the development of myopia. It is also recommending parents to take their children for eye tests. Optometrists are also asking for more funding for research in the UK population into the impact of the pandemic on children's eyesight.

Pray: for adequate media warnings so that parents are aware of the damage done by too much screen time and for the Government to fund further ophthalmologists' research. (Proverbs 22:6)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-58274916](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-58274916)

### More Covid cases this summer than in 2020

This time last year, the UK was slowly taking its first small steps into what would become the second wave of Covid-19. That led to tighter local restrictions and, ultimately, lockdowns across all the nations, which didn't start to unravel until late spring 2021. Case numbers right now are over 30 times higher than at the same point last year and showing signs of climbing again. We can pray to the Lord, our refuge and stronghold, to direct the health and well-being of our nation. As the media reports an increase in case numbers, may all who are fearful and anxious be at peace and free from worry. Pray for God to give people wise judgment as they increasingly gather with less social distancing and mask-wearing. Pray for medical staff and hospital workers who have been stressed and exhausted over the past 18 months, asking God to renew their strength as they contemplate future challenges from flu and Covid.

Pray: for those who are guiding our nation at this time, and shaping national policies, may they make wise decisions that halt the spread of infection. (Proverbs 1:5)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-58281664](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-58281664)

### Paralympics disability awareness

Ellie Simmonds and John Stubbs led the British team into the stadium to widespread welcome and approval on social media. The bright glare of Paralympics can be fleeting and all too quickly forgotten. On the day the Olympic flame was lit, the UK recorded a steep rise in costs of care for disabled adults. The Paralympics reveals some of the most inspirational stories in sport against a backdrop of the constant fight for equality beyond the games. Haven Shepherd lost both her legs below the knees at 14 months when her parents attempted a family suicide. Both parents died instantly. Haven became a disabled orphan. 'You always have to look at the positives of life, and I got a second chance,' she said, before her Paralympic swimming debut. These are Games of second chances for 4,402 Paralympians. Disabled people make up 15% of the world's population. The International Paralympic Committee aims to place disability at the heart of the inclusion agenda, alongside ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

Pray: for the bold ambition of the International Paralympic Committee to succeed and change how 15% of the world are treated and perceived. (Luke 14:12-13)

More: [www.independent.co.uk/sport/olympics/paralympics/opening-ceremony-tokyo-2020-gb-b1907982.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/olympics/paralympics/opening-ceremony-tokyo-2020-gb-b1907982.html)

## Princess Beatrice refreshingly honest about her dyslexia

Remembering her early school years, Princess Beatrice said, 'I remember feeling really confused - an overwhelming sense of "Why does this all feel a little bit muddled?"' She was reflecting on her childhood coping with dyslexia, as she prepared to welcome her first child with husband Edoardo Mapelli Mozzi, who is also dyslexic. It was the language she chose to describe her dyslexic experience that has sparked media and internet discussion. The pregnant princess referred to the language-based learning difficulty which can affect reading, writing, spelling, and speaking as a 'gift' that any of her future children would be lucky to have. 'I think that having dyslexia and reflecting on where I am right now in my career path, and also as an older person looking back, has definitely allowed me to look at things in a new way and come up with solutions', she said.

Pray: for Princess Beatrice's openness to discuss the challenges that dyslexics must overcome to make the disability more widely understood and appreciated. (Psalm 139:13-14)

More: [edition.cnn.com/2021/08/20/uk/royal-news-newsletter-08-20-21-scli-gbr-cmd-intl/index.html](https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/20/uk/royal-news-newsletter-08-20-21-scli-gbr-cmd-intl/index.html)

## Europe

### Luhansk: Christian books officially labelled extremist material

The government of the Luhansk People's Republic, which declared itself independent from Ukraine in 2014, has added four Christian books to an official list of banned extremist materials. The books were seized from the Council of Baptist Churches in the city of Sverdlovsk and in July they were added to the list by the justice ministry 'in order to secure the safety of the Republic'. There are 18 Christian works on the list of extremist materials, including a Russian version of the Gospel of John, a Billy Graham book, and a book by C H Spurgeon. Catholics have been denied a priest and the possibility to receive communion. An Orthodox Church of Ukraine chapel has been closed, and its bishop denied entry. Security forces also raid Protestant congregations and interrogate church leaders at police stations. We can ask God to soften the hearts of the authorities in Luhansk.

Pray: for Christians living in this Russian-speaking region to be strengthened, not crushed and protected not abandoned. (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

More: [www.forum18.org/archive.php?query=&religion=all&country=87](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?query=&religion=all&country=87)

### Ireland: lifting Covid-19 restrictions 'as quickly as possible'

Minister for health Stephen Donnelly said that the government will continue to lift Covid-19 restrictions 'as quickly as possible'. There would still be public health advice for situations where infection rates are higher. When asked if he thought that all restrictions on indoor capacity limits would be lifted before Christmas, he said, 'Yes, I do. The road to freedom lies ahead, but things may still get worse before they get better. What we want to do is to provide real certainty for people. It's been a brutal year and a half', he added. The government is currently working on a roadmap on the lifting of all restrictions, which will be published next week.

Pray: for God to give Ireland's leaders wisdom as they plan the roadmap. (Proverbs 10:14a)

More: [www.independent.ie/irish-news/health/government-to-continue-lifting-covid-19-restrictions-as-quickly-as-possible-health-minister-40782406.html](http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/health/government-to-continue-lifting-covid-19-restrictions-as-quickly-as-possible-health-minister-40782406.html)

## Worldwide

### Syria/Iraq: water crisis for millions

Thirteen aid groups have warned, 'Over 12 million people in Syria and Iraq are losing access to water, food and electricity and urgent action is needed to combat a severe water crisis.' Rising temperatures, reduced rainfall and drought deprive people of drinking and agricultural water and are in turn disrupting electricity as dams run out of water. This impacts the operations of essential infrastructure including health facilities. Five million people in Syria directly depend on the river. In Iraq, the loss of access to water from the river, and drought, threaten seven million people. 400 square kilometres of agricultural land risk total drought. Two Syrian dams serving electricity to three million face imminent closure. Communities including displaced people in camps have witnessed a rise in outbreaks of waterborne diseases since the water shortage. Swathes of Iraqi farmland, fisheries, power production and drinking water sources are depleted of water. Wheat production is depleted by 70%.

Pray: for authorities in the region and donor governments to act swiftly to save lives and invest in sustainable solutions to the water crisis. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

More: [reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/water-crisis-and-drought-threaten-more-12-million-syria-and-iraq](https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/water-crisis-and-drought-threaten-more-12-million-syria-and-iraq)

### Afghanistan: rescuing refugees

Airbnb is offering free housing to 20,000 Afghan refugees globally and is seeking more assistance from hosts who rent their property [through the accommodation-sharing company](https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/2021/august/airbnb-offers-free-housing-globally-for-20-000-afghan-refugees) (<https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/2021/august/airbnb-offers-free-housing-globally-for-20-000-afghan-refugees>). Samaritan's Purse, the Christian humanitarian group led by Franklin Graham, is responding to the situation in Afghanistan by partnering with other organisations to get men, women, and children out of the country. They are sponsoring flights which have carried hundreds to safety. Open Doors say Afghanistan is the second most dangerous place in the world to be a Christian, after North Korea. Most Afghan Christians are converted from Islam. Pray for God to protect the thousands of Christians in hiding in Afghanistan. Ask God to provide permanent accommodation and living costs for Christians recently rescued from Afghanistan into neighbouring and distant countries. Ask Him to provide the fearful and anxious with peace of mind as they settle into completely unfamiliar environments and possibly need to learn a new language.

Pray: for God's protection over Muslim converts, missionaries, and Christian aid workers who obeyed the Lord's call to serve in Afghanistan and are now trapped there. (2 Thessalonians 3:3)

More: [www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/2021/august/samaritans-purse-sponsoring-flights-to-help-desperate-afghans-flee-before-u-s-withdrawal](https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/2021/august/samaritans-purse-sponsoring-flights-to-help-desperate-afghans-flee-before-u-s-withdrawal)

### Argentina: profound anti-Semitism

Argentines are far more anti-Semitic than they acknowledge and nearly 40% of the population believes that 'Jewish businessmen' are benefiting from the Covid pandemic. 'In Argentina, we have a very distorted vision of ourselves', said an award-winning columnist. 'We think we are not anti-Semitic, but in many ways, this is an anti-Semitic country.' He went on to say that myths about the Jews are part of Argentina's popular culture. The study's main author was 'surprised' by the magnitude of antisemitic sentiment, particularly among younger people. Argentina is home to over 200,000 Jews, the largest community in Latin America.

Pray: for the anti-Semitism to be acknowledged and addressed by all who have had a distorted concept of Jewish culture and believed fake news. (Galatians 3:28)

More: [www.wzo.org.il/antisemitism/index.php](http://www.wzo.org.il/antisemitism/index.php)

### Afghanistan: anti-Taliban resistance group

The National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRF) has thousands of fighters in its Panjshir valley stronghold but wants to pursue negotiations with the Taliban before fighting. Amrullah Saleh, who was vice-president before being ousted by the Taliban, is now in Panjshir. The region successfully fought off Soviet forces in the ten-year Soviet-Afghan war and the Taliban in the 1990s. The NRF forces are led by Sandhurst-trained Ahmad Massoud (<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9920571/Afghan-resistance-army-DENIES-Taliban-propaganda-negotiating-surrender.html>), with many local resistance forces and US-trained ex-Afghan soldiers joining them. The mountainous valley, known for its natural defenses, has never been under Taliban control, partly thanks to Massoud's father, a notorious guerilla warrior. The NRF believes that for lasting peace it must address the underlying problems of a country made up of ethnic minorities, none of which is a majority. The NRF's ultimate goal is a decentralised form of governance in the country.

Pray: for the many tribal leaders to agree to negotiate peace across the regions of Afghanistan and begin to build a fair self-governing society without internal warfare and conflict. (Micah 4:3)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-58239156](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-58239156)

### Iran: prisons chief apologises

The head of Iran's prison service has apologised after hackers leaked videos showing the abuse of detainees at Tehran's notorious Evin prison. The security footage showed guards beating prisoners and dragging one along a floor. Mohammad Mehdi Haj-Mohammadi said he took responsibility for the 'unacceptable behaviour'. Many political prisoners and dual and foreign nationals are held at Evin. BBC's Jiyar Gol says the leaked videos confirm decades of reports of mistreatment and abuse at prisons across Iran. Also, former political prisoners say the footage is nothing compared to what they experienced in detention. They accuse authorities of routinely using sexual, physical and psychological torture - a charge Iran's government denies. The hacked screen showed the message, 'Evin Prison is a stain of shame on Raisi's black turban and white beard' - a reference to Iran's new president, who is a hardline cleric and former judiciary chief.

Pray: for more successful investigations into Evin prison so that injustice and abuse ends. (Proverbs 17:15)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-58315816](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-58315816)

### Haiti: gangs complicating earthquake relief efforts

As if Haiti doesn't have enough to deal with, gang activity is now complicating earthquake relief efforts. The earthquake death toll stands at 2,200 with at least 340 still missing. Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) is conducting emergency medical flights and flying in aid. But since the roads aren't a great option for transporting relief, the need is overwhelming. MAF's Dave McCleery says, 'Gang activity has affected Port-au-Prince for a long time. They have taken control of and closed the main roads into the southern peninsula where the earthquake took place. This is a real concern because of the large quantity of aid that's needed. We can certainly fly in and deliver it, but it's much more expensive and takes a lot longer than if it's delivered by road.'

Pray: for the Haitian government to negotiate successfully with the gangs to re-open roads so that all necessary shipments get through to the needy in affected areas. (Isaiah 1:17)

More: [www.mnnonline.org/news/gangs-complicating-earthquake-relief-efforts-in-haiti/](http://www.mnnonline.org/news/gangs-complicating-earthquake-relief-efforts-in-haiti/)

### Taiwan: homegrown vaccine criticised

Taiwan is administering its domestically developed Covid-19 vaccine, amid criticism that its approval was rushed. The Medigen vaccine had not completed phase three trials when it was granted emergency approval by regulators. Medigen said there were no major safety concerns, and antibodies created were no worse than AstraZeneca's vaccine. It is expected to complete the final round of trials being held in Paraguay later this year. Taiwan's vaccination efforts have been hampered by delivery delays and hesitancy amongst its population. President Tsai Ing-wen led the way in receiving the Medigen jab on 23 August. The objections have mainly come from the opposite political party, the Kuomintang, who say it is unsafe. More than 700,000 people have already signed up for the vaccine, which requires two doses 28 days apart. Less than 5% of Taiwan's population is fully vaccinated: around 40% have received just one dose.

Pray: for watchdogs, scientists and governments to make wise decisions around Covid immunisation in Taiwan and wherever there is research and development for a new vaccine. (Titus 3:1)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-58301573](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-58301573)

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