

# Prayer Alert

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**See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and He rules with a mighty arm. See, His reward is with Him, and his recompense accompanies Him. (Isaiah 40:10)**

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!

Can you help? - Prayer Alert is brought to your inbox without charge thanks largely to the generosity of individuals and organisations that freely provide most of the resources we need to operate. However, we would be grateful for donations from appreciative subscribers towards our costs. Please click the 'Donations' button above to make a contribution.

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

### [Victory for chaplain told to remove his cross](#)

Derek Timms, chaplain at Solihull Marie Curie hospice, was told by the hospice's senior chaplain to remove his small cross pin because it 'might offend' patients. Derek had worked at the hospice for four years, wearing his cross every day without any complaints. Yet the new senior chaplain told Derek he'd need 're-training' if he refused to remove it. With support from the Christian Legal Centre, Derek wrote to the Methodist minister to query the unreasonable request, which was then escalated to the regional office. In response, Marie Curie regional office offered unreserved apologies for the distress caused to him, confirming that there was no policy against wearing the cross.

Praise: God for Derek and all who unashamedly stand up for what their beliefs are wherever they are and whoever they are with. (Isaiah 52:7)

More: [mailchi.mp/christianconcern/christian-weekly-news-603940](http://mailchi.mp/christianconcern/christian-weekly-news-603940)

### [Mission to bikers and misfits](#)

When Sean, a preacher's son, was stirred by the Sermon on the Mount, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit', it became God's call for him to reach out to the margins of society. In both the UK and in other parts of the world, he launched God's Squad motorcycle clubs, sharing the message of Christ with those whom many regard as misfits. It helped that Sean loved bikes himself. His mission widened to embrace the homeless and others struggling to make sense of life. Their 'church' Zack's Place, named after the tax collector Jesus loved, is in a Swansea backstreet. Regulars are encouraged to pour out their troubles in a caring atmosphere where love and concern are demonstrated in more than words. Informal services are in a bar-style setting where meals are shared and spiritual food for thought is served.

Praise: God for the bikers who are upfront about their faith, wearing jackets emblazoned with God's Squad colours and demonstrating His love with and to the outcasts. (Luke 4:18-19)

More: <https://prophecytoday.uk/comment/church-issues/item/2684-god-s-squad-bikers.html>

## British Isles

### Dozens of Albanian child migrants missing

Almost 20% of unaccompanied child migrants from Albania in Kent County Council care have disappeared this year. Out of 197 children, 39 are missing. Ecpat UK, which campaigns to protect children from exploitation, said the figures were very concerning. The council said it worked closely with the Home Office and police to safeguard vulnerable children, but it can be very difficult to prevent some children from going missing. They attempt to identify beforehand any who are vulnerable to exploitation, and when a child is found they perform a debriefing to learn any lessons. The council felt under pressure over the number of asylum-seeking children it is required to take on, sometimes refusing to accept any more, with services at breaking point. Meanwhile children face labour exploitation in construction work, car washes, drug distribution, or the sex industry. The challenge of safeguarding children remains very real.

Pray: for the authorities to provide better protection for solitary children at risk of exploitation or being trafficked. (Psalm 138:7)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-63845680](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-63845680)

### Pray for the UK

Immigration is a reality of national life. London has 10,000+ people of over fifty various nationalities. Many Brits struggle to welcome immigrants, who often struggle to adjust to life in the UK. Pray for society to face the challenges of many cultures living together in peace. Immigrants from Christian nations like Nigeria and Brazil bring new church life and church growth. Pray for local congregations to plant new churches, reach new peoples, and glorify Jesus as they partner with believers from many lands. Sadly, England's inner cities are becoming physical and spiritual wastelands of drugs and crime. Dying churches and empty churches have been converted to mosques, temples, or gurdwaras as white evangelicals move to the suburbs. Inner-city whites in poverty and joblessness have few prospects. Pray for God to raise an army of workers to meet the many needs of impoverished and often troubled areas.

Pray: for God to release more ministries such as The Message Trust (in Manchester) and Street Pastors (in many cities) to build His church. (Matthew 16:18b)

More: [operationworld.org/prayer-calendar/12-06/](http://operationworld.org/prayer-calendar/12-06/)

### Children infected with strep A

Health officials want parents to be aware of an infection called strep A that children are dying from. Since Covid restrictions eased, there are more opportunities for other infections to spread. Strep A cases are increasing. The highly contagious bacterium can cause serious illness and complications. Many carry it harmlessly without even knowing they have it. It can be spread to others with a cough or sneeze. Most often, symptoms are mild - a sore throat or a skin infection which can be easily treated with antibiotics. But strep A can cause a range of serious illnesses like scarlet fever; nine children have died recently. Health professionals must tell local protection teams of suspected scarlet fever cases so that they can be treated quickly and possible outbreaks brought under control. Cases have risen tenfold this year, but the UK has 'good' antibiotic supplies [amid shortage fears](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/strep-a-signs-infections-uk-scarlet-fever-b2241168.html) (<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/strep-a-signs-infections-uk-scarlet-fever-b2241168.html>).

Pray: for schools, nurseries, care homes and places where many meet in confined spaces to be protected with immunisation injections if needed. (Psalm 41:3)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-63836093](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-63836093)

### London: Russian oligarchs under investigation

Over fifty officers were involved in an operation at a Russian businessman's multi-million-pound London home to investigate potential criminal activity by oligarchs. They arrested a 58-year-old man on suspicion of money laundering, conspiracy to defraud the Home Office, and conspiracy to commit perjury. He was also charged with obstructing an officer when trying to leave with a bag containing thousands of pounds in cash. Another man who is the former boyfriend of the businessman's current partner was arrested at his home in Pimlico for money laundering and conspiracy to defraud. The National Crime Agency (NCA), which was established this year, is having 'significant success' investigating potential criminal activity by oligarchs.

Pray: for further success as the NCA uses every power and tactic available to detect, disrupt and detain corrupt international business figures and their enablers. (Romans 8:21)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-63846029](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-63846029)

### Police watchdog head being investigated

Michael Lockwood has led the Office for Police Conduct as director general since 2018, handling the most serious complaints against police in England and Wales. Now he has been forced to resign after becoming the subject of a police investigation himself. The Home Secretary took action after learning of a probe into a historical allegation against Lockwood. He was asked either to resign or be suspended. No further information about the nature of the allegation was given. Home Office staff are now working to 'put in place temporary arrangements for the organisation's leadership'.

Pray: for a transparent investigation so that confidence in policing grows, and any corruption within the investigating body of the police force is eradicated completely. (Proverbs 15:27)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-63848998](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-63848998)

### No plan for wheelchair-accessible homes

Thousands of disabled people live in unsuitable homes, while cities fail to plan for wheelchair users. Three of the ten largest cities have no requirements beyond national guidelines, which only provide wheelchair users access through entrance doors and hallways on ground level. Disabled people face long housing searches, huge extra costs to convert accommodation, or living in a dangerous home. The Equality and Human Rights Commission said failure to plan for fully accessible homes is a 'hidden crisis' in housing for disabled people. The government said it will strengthen the national standards. As the number of disabled people increases, it is estimated that 400,000 wheelchair users in England alone are living in unsuitable accommodation. Many of our disabled cannot live

independently. They cannot afford the huge costs for adaptations or specialist accommodation; some can't even use parts of their own homes without someone coming in to help them.

Pray: for all councils to insist housebuilders meet higher standards of accessibility and give enough space for wheelchair users to move around in their homes. (Deuteronomy 27:18)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-62638644](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-62638644)

### Cold snap begins

The UK has snow and ice warnings in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the east coast of England. Forecasts of icy temperatures will last until at least early next week, possibly beyond. If people cannot heat every room or are struggling with heating costs, they are being advised by health officials to heat living rooms during the day and bedrooms before going to sleep. Pray for enough shelters to be provided for the homeless people. Pray for the elderly and sick to have plenty of hot food and drinks to keep warm and to stay warm regardless of heating costs. Fuel poverty charity National Energy Action called on the Government to step in with more help for those at greatest peril this winter: pray for the Government to listen and act. Pray for more 'warm banks' to be established, providing heated buildings for people to visit.

Pray: for God to help people to drive safely and walk carefully over slippery ground. (Hebrews 13:6)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-63893192](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-63893192)

## Europe

### Ukraine: archbishop's visit

The Archbishop of Canterbury visited Bucha and saw evidence of atrocities and civilian killings by Russian troops, as millions of people remain without power or heating after attacks on Ukraine's power grid. The most senior cleric in the Church of England was highlighting the need for support for Ukraine ahead of a tough winter. 'I am clear that Putin chose to start the war and release the evil that comes from that', he said. It is proper to support a 'victim nation' that is 'being overrun by aggression'. Stating that the international community had a 'duty of care' to protect weaker nations, he said that the consequences of letting Ukraine down would be 'infinitely worse' than carrying on the support for Kyiv. 'It would be more expensive and politically catastrophic because it would prove that Putin was right when he thought the West would not stand together for long enough for this to end justly and fairly.'

Pray: for the archbishop's statements to resound across the nations, encouraging them to give even more support to Ukraine's needs, and for God to bring peace and justice quickly. (Proverbs 16:7)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-63833573](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-63833573)

### Ukraine: ban on Orthodox Church

In a stunning announcement, President Zelenskiy said he intends to ban the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from Ukraine. His decision came on the heels of an investigation into the church's ties with 'the Patriarchate in Russia.' Ukraine will also ban the activities of any religious organisation affiliated with 'centres of influence' within Russia. 'We will ensure for our state the fullness of independence - in particular, spiritual independence. We will never allow anyone to build an empire inside the Ukrainian soul', Zelensky said. Orthodox Christians are the largest demographic in Ukraine. There have been some internal disagreements about who they support in the war between Ukraine and Russia, and Zelensky fears Russia may be using the church to plant agents in the church to undermine Ukraine's war effort. The majority of Orthodox leaders have announced their support for Ukraine, and Ukraine's Orthodox Church announced its full independence from Moscow's Patriarchate. It does not support Russia's invasion.

Pray: for God to send His light to the faithful living in the fog of war, and give them the strength to endure their current trials without turning against their president. (Isaiah 40:31)

More: [www.charismanews.com/world/90846-ukrainian-president-prepares-to-ban-the-ukrainian-orthodox-church](http://www.charismanews.com/world/90846-ukrainian-president-prepares-to-ban-the-ukrainian-orthodox-church)

## Worldwide

### Armenia: the forgotten war victims

A group of Armenian organisations has appealed to the UN, warning about ethnic cleansing of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijani Muslims. Their letter stated, 'Two years have passed since the war against Nagorno-Karabakh started, but security issues are not resolved yet. Many fundamental rights are continually violated, plus significant and increasing risk of new conflicts and atrocities. Ethnic cleansing of native Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh is especially alarming. The Azerbaijani government's extreme hatred and belligerent rhetoric, destruction of Armenian monuments, appropriation of cultural heritage, exceptional brutality by Azerbaijani armed forces, continuous threats of violence, and intimidation are characteristic of genocidal atrocities. The scenario of ethnic cleansing may become a reality if Azerbaijan's crimes remain unaddressed and effective pressure is not put on Baku to refrain from violence.' Armenian Christian families in villages across the enclave need prayer, hope, and practical help. If their pasturelands are not seized by armed forces, they are too dangerous to use because the military are so close. See

<https://mailchi.mp/barnabasfund/giving-tuesday-sheep-piglets-and-bees-for-armenian-christians-in-nagorno-karabakh-822337>

Pray: for the UN to help those in eastern and southern Armenia facing significant livelihood challenges, and for God to protect his people and give them peace of mind. (Philippians 2:13)

More: [radar.am/en/news/nagorno-karabakh-2539518769/](http://radar.am/en/news/nagorno-karabakh-2539518769/)

### Israel: Hezbollah storing chemical weapons

Saudi news channel Al-Hadath reported that hundreds of Iranian missiles armed with the lethal chemical thionyl chloride have arrived at a warehouse in Syria, with a bird's eye view of Lebanon's border nine miles away. They were transferred there by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The recipient was Hezbollah, the Iran-backed Lebanese terror army on Israel's northern border. According to Saudi media, Hezbollah has Iran and North Korea to thank for the arsenal. Plans are reportedly in place to move them to

a site three miles from Israel's border. Israel's defence ministry identified ten Syrian locations where Iran has facilities producing advanced weapons for its proxies in the region. Pray for Israel's defence force to constantly look to God for guidance. May the Lord enable them to think outside the box as Gideon did when he divided the men into companies with trumpets and companies with jars containing torches (Judges 7:16).

Pray: for Israel successfully to improve its weapons development and cyberwarfare expertise. (Ezekiel 37:10)  
More: [www.bridgesforpeace.com/hezbollah-stockpiles-cache-of-chemical-weapons/](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com/hezbollah-stockpiles-cache-of-chemical-weapons/)

### DR Congo: UN denounces massacre

The UN's peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has denounced the killings of fifty villagers by M23 in the conflict-racked east, and called for an investigation to 'bring justice'. The March 23 movement, or M23, is a Congolese Tutsi rebel group that was dormant for years. It took up arms again last November, seizing Bunagana town on Uganda's border in June. 'The UN said that the killings could constitute crimes under international humanitarian law, as well as violating the recent ceasefire. Denis Mukwege, a Congolese doctor who won the Nobel Peace Prize for helping rape victims in the strife-torn region, also expressed horror at reports of mass slaughter, missing people, and forced recruitment of children into conflict. Human Rights Watch said UN troops should be deployed to protect survivors. Pray that M23 is disarmed and withdraws from land it has seized as requested by the East African leaders. On 8 December the UN announced that 131 civilians had died in an attack by M23 in November.  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-63899461>

Pray: for the safety of 200,000 displaced people and the end to this Tutsi offensive. (Philippians 4:6-7)  
More: [www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/2/clamour-for-inquiry-after-massacre-claim-in-dr-congo](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/2/clamour-for-inquiry-after-massacre-claim-in-dr-congo)

### Indonesia: volcanic eruption

Mount Semeru on Java has erupted and sparked 2,500 evacuations, mostly on motorcycles. The volcano's warning status escalated to the highest level on 4 December. The next day a giant cloud of grey ash engulfed the mountain and surrounding rice paddy fields, roads and bridges, turning the sky black, and a pyroclastic flow of lava, rocks and hot gases gushed down the mountainside. Volcanic ash mixed with monsoon rain fell on six nearby villages, and everyone was evacuated by rescuers. Semeru is the highest and most active Java volcano. Pray for the evacuated who do not know what they will discover when they return from the high alert situation.

Pray: for the people who suffered burns, and those whose livelihoods were destroyed. (Jeremiah 17:14)  
More: [www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thousands-alert-indonesias-java-after-mt-semeru-eruption-2022-12-05/](http://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thousands-alert-indonesias-java-after-mt-semeru-eruption-2022-12-05/)

### Haiti: city taken hostage by gangs

In Port-au-Prince your life depends on knowing where the boundaries are. Competing gangs are claiming areas, kidnapping, raping, killing at will and demarcating territories in blood. Cross from one gang's turf to another, and you may not return. Armed groups terrorise 60% of the capital by controlling roads. 1,000 people were killed between January and June. The last head of state was killed in office, creating a vacuum; there is no functioning parliament, and the US-backed unelected prime minister is unpopular. Half the population face acute hunger, 20,000 face famine-like conditions and cholera, but gangs are the greatest plague. Morning and evening rush hours are kidnapping times as commuters are snatched from the streets in a growing industry. Ransoms range from £164 to £820,000. Most victims return if ransoms are paid, but they suffer: rape, burns by melted plastic, and more. Catholicism is the official religion, but voodoo is the national religion (<http://countrystudies.us/haiti/33.htm>). The majority of Haitians practise some aspects of voodoo.

Pray: for the Holy Spirit to saturate and strengthen the Church with God's power to overcome the evil cloud of fear, violence and death covering Port-au-Prince. (Luke 10:19)  
More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-63707429](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-63707429)

### Syria: time to rethink aid

Contrary to the common perception ('Syria's situation has settled, so Syrians no longer need urgent humanitarian aid') conditions especially in the rebel-held northwest have been worsening. The Assad regime and Russia continue to block access to food, medicine and other vital necessities. The Covid pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the consequent global economic downturn have exacerbated the crisis. Soaring inflation in neighbouring Turkey has also had a devastating effect on the economy in the region, where the Turkish lira is widely used along with the US dollar. Four million people in north-western Syria urgently need aid. Over 3.1 million internally displaced persons are food-insecure. Clean water is scarce. Cholera is spreading and there is a sharp decline in humanitarian aid. Pray for unconditional access to vital food and water to be guaranteed for all Syrians; International media coverage and fundraising campaigns to boost donations for the Syria crisis; and in the longer term, for Syrians to be able not merely to survive but to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Pray: for the Syrian people to be freed from political hostage-taking. (Isaiah 25:4)  
More: [www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/12/8/it-is-time-to-rethink-how-we-deliver-aid-to-syria](http://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/12/8/it-is-time-to-rethink-how-we-deliver-aid-to-syria)

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