

Prayer Alert

ISSUE 33-2023 | Friday 18 August 2023
www.prayer-alert.net | editor@prayer-alert.net

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

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

Praise Reports

[Migration boosts Manchester churches](#)
[Former Taliban leader receives the Holy Spirit](#)

British Isles

[Northern Ireland: police data breach update](#)
[Scotland: school unions threaten strike](#)
[Comedy show cancelled over gender views](#)
[Safeguarding in the Church of England](#)
[A-level clearing chaos](#)
[Captain Tom charity faces more scrutiny](#)

Europe

[Ukraine: corruption = high treason](#)
[Russia: prisoner recruits commit new crimes](#)
[Ukraine: trade land for peace?](#)
[Lithuania: change needed](#)

Worldwide

[USA: aftermath of wildfires](#)
[Israel: change needed for peace to prevail](#)
[Global: IJM praise and prayer needs](#)
[Zimbabwe: elections](#)
[USA: Trump charged with racketeering](#)
[Pakistan: over 100 arrested after churches burned](#)

Praise Reports

[Migration boosts Manchester churches](#)

Migrant communities from West Africa and India are renewing and revitalising Manchester churches. As many of them work at hospitals, Fr Paul Hutchins has added a mid-week service to make attendance easier for people working at weekends. He also encourages members to shape the worship, bringing hymns and prayers from their churches of origin, helping them feel as at home as possible. He says, 'Five years ago we had sparks of promise as a multicultural congregation, but in a short space of time we have seen huge increases in new worshippers from Ghana, Nigeria, and South India.' Three churches in the diocese have seen huge boosts to their congregations, mostly thanks to the families which have migrated to the area.

Praise: God for Fr Paul leading the way in meeting his congregation where they are at and helping them make the Anglican churches their spiritual home. (Matthew 16:18)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/migration-brings-huge-boost-to-parish-churches

[Former Taliban leader receives the Holy Spirit](#)

Illinois pastor Robby Dawkins recently shared on Facebook a photo of him praying for a former Taliban leader in Afghanistan. It was a powerful moment which quickly went viral. 'This (now former) Taliban leader attended our training in Afghanistan. He was so hit by the Holy Spirit's power that he crumpled to the ground when I laid hands on him and prayed.' People are praising God for encountering a leader of the Taliban, as Afghan Christians have been through brutal persecution by the group. 'Several there said this guy would normally kill us if it wasn't for the impact Jesus made on him, transforming his entire life.' Afghanistan needs Jesus today more than ever: let us continue to pray for revival in the nation.

Praise: God for Christian ministries and outreach events that bring Holy Spirit revelations and explosions of revival in dark places. (Mark 16:15)

More: godtv.com/former-taliban-leader/

British Isles

[Northern Ireland: police data breach update](#)

Last week you prayed for the police to have adequate support and protection after their names, rank, grade, location and unit were made available online to the public accidentally. This week the chairman of the PSNI Catholic Guild has called for an urgent meeting with Chief Constable Byrne over fears that the breach will put Catholics off joining the force. A number of groups are claiming they have access to the leaked information, prompting greater safety concerns. Many Catholic members of the force have genuine concerns over safety for

themselves and in many cases their family members. Mr Murray said, 'Our guild was formed to provide a support service for Catholic police, and it is hard to think of a more pressing issue for Catholic officers and staff than this data breach'. Pray for ongoing protection for Catholic police and their families. Pray for those in receipt of the leaked data to be prevented from using it.

Pray: for the Chief Constable and senior investigators to ensure fully, quickly and successfully that procedures are put in place so that this can never happen again. (Ephesians 5:15)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/catholic-police-officers-demand-urgent-meeting-over-ni-data-breach

Scotland: school unions threaten strike

GMB Scotland have announced that school staff in catering, cleaning, pupil support, administration and janitorial services will strike on 13 and 14 September, and teachers in the Unite Union have also voted to strike over pay after the summer break - dates not yet confirmed. GMB members rejected a 5.5% pay offer in April, saying it is not close to matching the cost of living, and warned of disruption in schools. They are giving plenty of warning of strike dates, insisting that there is still time to resolve the dispute, and knowing that even the possibility of strikes closing schools is a powerful weapon. Last year's council pay dispute led to rubbish building up in city streets. A settlement was made possible after the government gave councils more money to help them increase their pay offer. So far, council body Cosla has not asked the government for more money for pay.

Pray: for first minister Humza Yousaf to avoid strikes that will adversely affect children's education. (James 3:13)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-66532163

Comedy show cancelled over gender views

A comedy show in Edinburgh featuring the Father Ted writer and comedian Graham Linehan has been cancelled. The venue pulled the gig because it did not support the comedian's views, which did not align with their overall values. Linehan has been an outspoken critic of transgender self-identification. He urged the venue to reconsider its decision and suggested the cancellation might be unlawful. He has responded on X, formerly Twitter, by challenging the venue to explain which of his views it found offensive. He posted, 'It sounds like discrimination on the grounds of my legally protected beliefs.' The organisers of his gig are looking for an alternative venue. Earlier this year another Edinburgh venue cancelled a scheduled festival appearance by SNP MP Joanna Cherry because staff were not comfortable with her views on transgender issues. However, they later apologised, admitting the cancellation was unlawful discrimination against Ms Cherry.

Pray: for an end to belief discrimination against comedians, playwrights and politicians. (Galatians 5:14)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-66516252

Safeguarding in the Church of England

On 16 August the Future of Church Safeguarding Programme was set up to recommend a model for fully independent safeguarding within the Church of England. Operating independently, it is led by Professor Alexis Jay OBE with her chosen team which excludes anyone employed or previously employed by the Church. Support is provided by Crest Advisory (providing specialist independent support in justice and public safety), and no meetings or business will be conducted on church premises. The team will gather a range of views from survivors of abuse, clergy, church staff, church volunteers, and members of the public to better understand what needs to be improved and what is working well in church safeguarding processes. Respondents can share their views through an online survey or be interviewed in-person up to 31 October. It will be published by 31 December.

Pray: for the Church to follow safeguarding standards that are fair and impartial and as rigorous as those in secular safeguarding contexts. (Psalm 4:8)

More: lawandreligionuk.com/2023/08/16/the-future-of-safeguarding-in-the-church-of-england/

A-level clearing chaos

The Department for Education confirmed that the drop of top A-level grades by nearly 10% from last year is the biggest ever, causing chaos for those hoping to secure a university place. 19,000 students who were not accepted scrambled for clearing places, causing the UCAS website to crash. Welsh and Northern Ireland A-level students were given advance information about topics to expect in their exam papers. English students were not given the same support. Ofqual said it built protection into the English grading process because of the disruption that students had faced. This should have enabled students to get the grades they would have received before the pandemic even if the quality of their work was a bit weaker due to disruption. The Association of School and College Leaders said the 'sharp fall' in high A-level results was because the grading system was adjusted. Pray for the fearful and disappointed students who have not secured their first choice of university or college.

Pray: for the examination grading systems across the British Isles to be identical in every location, and for the results to be true to the student's ability. (Titus 2:7)

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/a-level-results-grades-ucas-covid-clearing-boundaries-b2394555.html

Captain Tom charity faces more scrutiny

Following a watchdog [review of the charity's accounts](https://www.prayer-alert.net/index.php?option=com_acymailing&ctrl=url&subid=1&urlid=21710&mailid=607), (https://www.prayer-alert.net/index.php?option=com_acymailing&ctrl=url&subid=1&urlid=21710&mailid=607) the Captain Tom Foundation faces renewed scrutiny over reports that its co-founder Hannah Ingram-Moore received thousands of pounds for judging a Virgin Media O2 awards ceremony featuring foundation. She was the £85,000-a-year CEO of the foundation, but did not seek its board approval before entering into a commercial agreement with Virgin Media O2. Her appearance fee was paid into a private company which she and her husband owned. After a series of controversies, the Captain Tom Foundation stopped taking donations earlier this year. Its 2022 accounts recorded it giving out £160,000 of over £1m it raised. There have been ongoing investigations regarding conflicts of interest between the charity and businesses owned by the Ingram-Moores, as well as concerns over mismanagement and compliance with charity law.

Pray: for full examination of every balance sheet and negotiation, and for anything that is illegal and purposely hidden to be discovered and perpetrators prosecuted. (Proverbs 21:15)

More: www.theguardian.com/society/2023/aug/16/captain-tom-charity-faces-scrutiny-after-report-of-payments-to-daughter

Europe

Ukraine: corruption = high treason

Thirty conscription officials in Ukraine have been accused of taking cash and cryptocurrency bribes to smuggle people out of the country. All men over the age of 18 capable of fighting are eligible to be conscripted, and most adult men under the age of 60 are prohibited from leaving the country. Mr Zelensky posted a video on social media saying, 'Conscription officials who took bribes and smuggled people out of the country have been sacked in an anti-corruption purge. Bribery at a time of war is high treason'. The president's office said that the corruption allegations pose a threat to Ukraine's national security and undermine confidence in state institutions. Replacement officials will be chosen from candidates with battlefield experience and vetted by the intelligence service.

Pray: for Ukraine's leaders to have the insights and wisdom to remove the long-running problem of corruption in public services. (James 3:17)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-66478422

Russia: prisoner recruits commit new crimes

Demyan Kevorkyan, a prisoner released early to fight with Wagner mercenaries is accused of a double murder after returning home from the war. He was arrested for killing a young man and woman on their way home from work. He is not the only convict who was freed early to fight and then reoffended. It is confirmed that suspects in about twenty serious offences, including rape and murder, are fighters recruited from prison by Wagner to fight in Ukraine. Kevorkyan was one of 150 prisoners recruited on 31 August 2022, and was later spotted back in his home village of Pridorozhnaya in south-west Russia telling people he had just returned from the battlefields of Ukraine.

Pray: for Russian police and prison officers to have a better awareness of the dangers when considering the release of prisoners to be recruited to kill as mercenaries. (Proverbs 19:20)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-66364272

Ukraine: trade land for peace?

At a meeting in Norway where NATO alliance members were discussing how the 18-month-old war might be brought to an end, Stian Jenssen, chief of staff to NATO's secretary general, said, 'I think a solution could be for Ukraine to give up territory, and get NATO membership in return.' Jenssen noted that discussions about Ukraine's postwar status were continuing in diplomatic circles. Jenssen was careful to stress that he was simply airing an idea and that 'it must be up to Ukraine to decide when and on what terms they want to negotiate', reflecting NATO's position that no peace settlement should be agreed without Ukraine's assent. Kyiv said a land-for-NATO deal would reward Russian aggression.

Pray: for NATO's support for Ukraine to continue until a just and lasting peace is achieved. (Matthew 5:9)

More: www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/16/nato-official-suggests-ukraine-could-give-up-territory-in-exchange-for-membership

Lithuania: change needed

Freedom has brought good progress in Lithuania. Doors for the gospel remain open. However, freedom has also brought dangers like greed for material goods, selfish pleasure-seeking, and a belief that traditional morals have no value. Substance abuse, suicide, and trafficking of women for prostitution all damage the social foundations. Spiritual transformation must accompany economic growth. Lithuania was the last European nation to be Christianised.

Pray: for God to bring massive social change through His people. (Romans 12:2)

More: operationworld.org/prayer-calendar/08-17/

Worldwide

USA: aftermath of wildfires

Wildfires have devastated communities on Maui and Hawaii. The historic town of Lahaina has burned to the ground. Pastor Milhoan from South Maui said, 'I've been deployed to Iraq twice. Maui looks like a war zone, a smouldering mess.' Over 110 Maui residents are dead. Only 25% of the fire zone has been searched; ruins are marked with an orange X after initial searches and HR if human remains were found. People with missing relatives give DNA samples to help identify victims. Red Cross, churches, mission agencies, hotels and holiday lets are housing residents and distributing food, clothing medicine, etc. But a different horror is emerging - looting vacant homes and bodies of the dead. Enomoto had to use violence to stop someone he found looting the charred body of an elderly woman. There was gold and jewellery everywhere. Pray for the looting to stop as fire zones are searched.

Pray: for traumatised survivors to have counselling, for those in mourning to be comforted, for the injured to have medical aid, and for help to reach every area where there are needs. (Isaiah 53:5b)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-66529890

Israel: change needed for peace to prevail

Tens of thousands of Israelis continue with weekly protests over the justice system and as many as one in three are considering leaving Israel. A leading radiologist, Professor Hoffmann, is in the process of moving to a UK hospital and is trying to persuade other members of his family, who all have European passports, to consider leaving too. He is going to London for a sabbatical, to see if he can live outside Israel, where the situation is worsening daily. Protesters believe that government changes endanger democracy, while Israel's coalition argues that it fixes a judicial system where elected politicians are too easily overruled. Demonstrators hope to overturn new laws, but many admit that emigrating is something they, or those close to them, have considered. One demonstrator said, 'It would be heart-breaking but I will not raise my children in a country which is not democratic. If I'm not sure that my daughter's rights as a young woman are guaranteed, we will not stay here.'

Pray: for God to change the dynamics of unrest and end the exodus. (Ezra 6:12)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-66474153

Global: IJM praise and prayer needs

International Justice Mission (IJM) supported 14-year-old Hana to testify against a serving army officer who sexually assaulted her. Braving a military courtroom and facing the intimidation of officers dressed in army green uniform, Hana won her case. He was jailed for 14 years. Pray that this sentence sends a strong message to the community that abusing children is a crime. Pray for Hana's healing. Bolivia's Global Survivor Network uses shadow theatre, songs and presentations to raise awareness about violence against women and children and the problem of victim-blaming. Pray that God can work in the hearts of the people who attended the events so that this crime decreases in Bolivia. In Guatemala, IJM trained 43 judges on trauma-informed and victim-centred approaches that ensure survivors are treated with compassion and dignity. Pray that as justice system providers learn how to interact with and serve victims better, investigations and prosecutions will be more efficient.

Pray: for justice and God's comfort and peace for women and children suffering at the hands of those who should love and protect them. (Psalm 9:9)

More: ijm.app.box.com/s/29pu7mn14g96yo2ngate8t37gs57fq6g

Zimbabwe: elections

On 23 August citizens will vote in presidential and legislative elections. President Emerson Mnangagwa is seeking re-election; Nelson Chamisa is running for the newly created Citizens' Coalition for Change. The presidency is decided by absolute majority; for the legislature, the National Assembly, 210 of the 270 total seats are single-member constituencies. The remaining 60 seats are reserved for women parliamentarians and are awarded proportionally. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) is responsible for administering the vote. With no meaningful reforms to ensure ZEC's independence and the uneven playing field for political parties, international rights groups are expressing concerns over whether the country is capable of holding credible and fair elections. The president misuses state resources for campaigning, and last year relatives of ruling party politicians and loyalists were appointed to the ZEC as election commissioners. Police block opposition party meetings and rallies, and public broadcasters give preferential coverage to the ruling ZANU-PF party.

Pray: for a peaceful and credible electoral process, and for government members to successfully reduce hyperinflation, unemployment, and other economic crises. (Micah 6:8)

More: freedomhouse.org/report/election-watch-digital-age#zimbabwe-2023

USA: Trump charged with racketeering

Georgia prosecutors have charged Donald Trump and 18 others with attempting to overturn his 2020 election loss. Trump is facing thirteen new charges, including racketeering. Racketeering is organised crime where someone makes money through illegal activities. Penalties are prison terms - five to twenty years, or £197,000 fines - which can help persuade subordinates to cut deals with the prosecution in exchange for lesser sentences. Organised criminal activity is prosecuted under the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act; this includes convicting mafia bosses. When the court proceedings take place, they will dominate the next presidential election - making it a campaign unlike any other.

Pray: for the justice system to do what it is meant to do with a full, honest public hearing, and for the Republican Party to let go of the Donald Trump cult and become conservative again. (Ecclesiastes 3:17)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/world-us-canada-66364230

Pakistan: over 100 arrested after churches burned

Over 100 people were arrested in Jaranwala after thousands of Muslims burned churches and vandalised homes. The unrest was sparked by claims that two Christian men tore pages from the Quran. The historic Salvation Army Church was still smouldering on 17 August, one day after the riot. The ruins are surrounded with barbed wire. The situation remains tense. Public gatherings have been restricted for seven days. The men accused of damaging the Quran have been charged with blasphemy, punishable by death. An accusation of blasphemy can result in widespread riots, lynchings and killings. Yassir Bhatti, a 31-year-old Christian, was one of those forced to flee their homes. 'They broke the windows, doors and took out fridges, sofas, chairs and other household items to pile them up in front of the church to be burnt. They also burnt and desecrated Bibles, they were ruthless.' Videos on social media show protesters destroying Christian buildings while police appear to look on.

Pray: for justice and action from law enforcement and those who dispense justice, and the safety of all citizens. (Psalm 82:3)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-66517901

Please feel free to distribute Prayer Alert to anyone you feel will benefit from its ministry. All we ask is that you do not edit or change it in any way or charge for its use without contacting us first for written permission

Prayer Alert is produced in partnership with
The World Prayer Centre, PO Box 17971, Birmingham, B2 2NY, England.

The views expressed in Prayer Alert and on our website are those of the authors, organisations and websites named, and are not necessarily those of the Prayer Alert Editorial Team, the Prayer Alert Steering Group or the World Prayer Centre or any of its employees or trustees. While we try to ensure that the information we provide is correct, mistakes do occur and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of our material. If you do notice any mistakes then please let us know.