

Prayer Alert

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You, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek You. (Psalm 9:10b)

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!

Join the Team!

Prayer Alert is produced by a voluntary online team spread across England. If you appreciate what we do and are computer confident, with researching news, writing, editing and / or proofing skills, we would love to hear from you! Please hit reply, introduce yourself, and we will be in touch.

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

Blessings,

David Fletcher and the Prayer Alert Team

Praise Reports

[Church hall badminton 'a great opportunity to serve community'](#)
[Family wins freedom to name their deceased daughter](#)

British Isles

[8@80: Ian Cole's walk of blessing](#)
[Biggest untapped UK oil field approved](#)
[Reprimands for leaking abuse victims' personal details](#)
[University students face 'unprecedented rent rises'](#)
[Mike Pilavachi DBS referral](#)
[UK's first drug consumption room go-ahead](#)

Europe

[Youth vs Europe: 'unprecedented' climate trial](#)
[Ukrainian forces' 'success' near Bakhmut](#)
[Russia: Navalny loses appeal against 19-year jail term](#)

Worldwide

[Iraq: 100+ dead in wedding blaze](#)
[Canada: Trudeau calls Nazi standing ovation 'deeply embarrassing'](#)
[Niger: Macron orders military exit](#)
[Azerbaijan arrest as exodus tops 50,000](#)
[Gaza-Israel tensions spiral](#)
[Haiti: Kenyan police to confront gangs](#)
[Australia: World Prayer Assembly](#)
[Antarctica heatwave linked to climate change](#)

Praise Reports

[Church hall badminton 'a great opportunity to serve community'](#)

Badminton England recently launched a strategy aimed at making the game the most inclusive and accessible in the country. As part of the plan, it intends to open up 200 new spaces for playing badminton, including faith spaces like church halls. Lisa Elliott, a former professional badminton player now affiliated with Christians in Sport (CIS), commended the strategy while cautioning against pressuring players to attend church events. She suggested that this initiative could be a wonderful chance for churches to foster friendships, build relationships, and pray, with the hope that it may lead to meaningful connections in the future. Christians in Sport, an organisation that assists athletes in living out and sharing their faith, collaborates with sportspeople like Elliott to integrate their beliefs with their sporting endeavours.

Praise: God for the opportunity to serve our communities through these initiatives that promote fitness and wellbeing. (Romans 12:13)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/church-hall-badminton-initiative-a-great-opportunity-to-serve-community

[Family wins freedom to name their deceased daughter](#)

A family has been allowed to name their late 19-year-old daughter, Sudiksha Thirumalesh, after being denied the opportunity to seek specialist treatment abroad due to restrictive reporting regulations. Sudiksha, who suffered from a rare genetic mitochondrial disease, was engaged in a legal battle with the NHS for over six months to seek experimental treatment that could potentially have saved her life. Although she was fully conscious and able to communicate, a court order prevented her and her family from raising funds to travel to Canada for a clinical trial. Sudiksha's situation gained significant media attention, especially after her tragic death. The family, who are committed Christians, have expressed their distress at the treatment they received from the hospital trust and the courts. They felt silenced, intimidated, and prevented from accessing potential life-saving treatment for Sudiksha. Now they hope to seek justice for her and raise awareness of how critical care decisions are made in the NHS and the courts. There are calls for a more transparent and open system to prevent similar ordeals for other patients and families.

Praise: and thank God for the life of Sudiksha. We pray for justice, healing, and transparency. (Psalm 34:17-18)

More: christianconcern.com/ccpressreleases/her-name-is-sudiksha-family-wins-freedom-to-name-their-19-year-old-daughter-after-tragic-death/

British Isles

8@80: Ian Cole's walk of blessing

Ian Cole, founder of World Prayer Centre, will be celebrating his 80th birthday by embarking on an eight-mile sponsored "Walk of Blessing" across parts of South Birmingham. The walk, taking place on 30 September, aims to pray blessings on every church and school along the route. Ian has set a sponsorship target of £80,000 (£1,000 for each year of his life) and is asking for support based on the number 8 (£8, £18, £80, £800, £8,000...). So far, £22,773 has been raised. He was recently given the 'all clear' after being diagnosed with prostate and bladder cancer in 2020. The money raised from the challenge will benefit three charities: World Prayer Centre, Love Your Neighbour (based in inner-city Birmingham), and Advantage Africa (working among the poorest in Kenya and Uganda). World Prayer Centre operates locally, nationally, and globally. The WPC team and Ian's family will join him on the walk, and they are thrilled for any sponsorship support as Ian celebrates his milestone birthday and his service for God and the body of Christ.

Pray: for God's richest blessing on Ian as he walks to bless many others. (Psalm 67:1)

More: worldprayer.org.uk/campaigns/880-a-walk-of-blessing/

Biggest untapped UK oil field approved

The UK's largest untapped oil field has been approved for development by regulators. It is estimated that Rosebank, 80 miles west of Shetland, could produce 300 million barrels of oil - but opponents say those could account for 200 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. The lead company Equinor puts the capacity at about 70,000 barrels per day, which the BBC calculates would be about 10% of the UK's current daily production. At that rate it would take about twelve years to extract the recoverable oil, although other groups have made higher estimates of the amount that could be found. The Government has welcomed the decision, saying it will raise billions of pounds and 'make us more secure against tyrants like Putin'. Rishi Sunak said, 'As we make the transition to renewables, we will still need oil and gas: it makes sense to use our own'. But Scotland's first minister Humza Yousaf said he was 'disappointed', while the Green Party called the decision 'morally obscene'.

Pray: for guidance for our politicians in balancing the need for energy resources with care for our environment. (Matthew 5:9)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-66933804

Reprimands for leaking abuse victims' personal details

Several organisations, including councils, solicitors, an NHS trust, and the police, have faced reprimands for breaching the personal data of domestic abuse victims in the UK. The Information Commissioner has warned that such data breaches put the lives of victims at risk, with many cases involving the disclosure of the victim's home address to their alleged abuser. The breaches have included accidental messages revealing new addresses, and the posting of court bundles containing addresses to the wrong recipient, necessitating urgent relocation of victims. The commissioner has issued reprimands to seven organisations involved in data violations impacting domestic abuse survivors since June 2022. He has called for proper training and systems to prevent such incidents in the future. Domestic abuse charities emphasise the importance of protecting personal information, as abusers often escalate their control after separation. The data violations, which are seen as severely undermining women's safety, highlight the urgent need for improved responses to domestic abuse by public services.

Pray: for protection and divine guidance for domestic abuse victims and survivors. May their personal information be safeguarded. (Psalm 91:4)

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/domestic-abuse-personal-details-breach-b2418834.html

University students face 'unprecedented rent rises'

University students in the UK are facing unprecedented rent increases as the value of maintenance loans fails to keep pace. Rents have risen by over 8% since 2022, with some cases seeing increases of up to 27%. The demand for accommodation has soared, with nearly 390,000 more students needing housing in the past decade. Rising operational and development costs, high inflation, and a decline in new bed space delivery have contributed to the increases. The average private sector rent outside London now exceeds £7,600 per year, consuming 77% of the maximum student maintenance loan allowance. Fewer than 10% of beds in major university cities are affordable to students receiving maintenance loans and grants. Rental growth in purpose-built student accommodation has reached 9.4%, exacerbating the affordability challenge. Students are increasingly taking on part-time work to cover expenses, negatively impacting their studies. To address the crisis, there have been calls for increased maintenance loans, rent freezes, and rent controls.

Pray: for university students facing financial hardships. Pray for provision of affordable housing and appropriate levels of support. (Matthew 6:26)

More: www.theguardian.com/education/2023/sep/27/uk-university-students-facing-unprecedented-rent-rises

Mike Pilavachi DBS referral

The founder of Soul Survivor Watford has been referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) following a national safeguarding investigation that found he had engaged in inappropriate relationships and physical interactions with young individuals. The Church of England has confirmed that a referral has been made for Canon Rev Mike Pilavachi to be considered for the DBS barred lists, which prohibit individuals from working with vulnerable groups. The DBS will assess whether Pilavachi should be placed on either or both of the lists. Pilavachi resigned from his position as associate pastor of Soul Survivor Watford in July and stated that he would not comment further on the allegations, expressing his desire for the healing of the Church and seeking forgiveness from those he may have hurt. The DBS does not comment on individual cases.

Pray: for healing and appropriate justice in this situation. May God grant strength and support to all affected. (Psalm 34:18)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/mike-pilavachi-could-face-ban-on-working-with-children-following-dbs-referral

UK's first drug consumption room go-ahead

Officials in Glasgow are expected to approve plans for the UK's first drug consumption room. The facility, known as the Safe Drug Consumption Facility (SDFC), would allow users to take their own drugs under the supervision of health professionals. Campaigners believe the facility could be 'life-changing' in addressing Scotland's high drug death rate, which remains the highest in Europe. The UK government does not support the plans but has stated it will not block the pilot. The proposed location for the facility is in Glasgow's east end, where a heroin assisted treatment service has been operating since 2019. The Scottish government has committed funding for the first year of operation, and Glasgow's Health and Social Care Partnership will cover building costs and necessary redesign. The plans will be presented to the city council's Integration Joint Board for approval. The move comes after the city council became the first local authority in the UK to formally support the decriminalisation of drug consumption.

Pray: for wisdom and guidance as officials consider the drug consumption room in Glasgow. May God grant healing and hope to those affected. (Psalm 147:3)

More: news.stv.tv/west-central/official-drug-consumption-room-could-open-in-glasgow-as-drug-death-bill-launches

Europe

Youth vs Europe: 'unprecedented' climate trial

Six young people from wildfire and heatwave-affected areas in Portugal have taken 32 European governments to court, accusing them of violating their human rights by not taking sufficient action on climate change. The case, filed in September 2020 against all the EU member states and also Britain, Switzerland, Norway, Russia, and Turkey, is the largest climate case ever heard by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg. A ruling is expected in the first half of 2024. The applicants argue that the failure to address climate change endangers their rights to life and physical and mental well-being. One of the applicants, 15-year-old Andre Oliveira, highlighted the impact of heat extremes on his ability to exercise and spend time outdoors, leading to sleep difficulties and worsening conditions due to weak climate policies.

Pray: for justice and positive action on climate change to protect the rights of future generations. (Psalm 24:1)

More: www.reuters.com/world/europe/youth-vs-europe-unprecedented-climate-trial-kick-off-rights-court-2023-09-27/

Ukrainian forces' 'success' near Bakhmut

Ukrainian forces have reportedly achieved success in villages near Bakhmut, a key town previously seized by Russian forces. According to Ilia Yevlash, spokesperson for Ukraine's forces in the east, Russian troops fired on Ukrainian soldiers 580 times and used aircraft four times. Ukrainian troops have made significant progress, with defenders continuing to repel the enemy under heavy fire. The spokesperson claimed that 141 Russian troops were killed and several pieces of artillery equipment destroyed. Ukrainian forces in the south are reportedly preparing to advance towards the Sea of Azov, prompting Russian forces to bring in reserves. Volodymyr Zelenskiy commended the successes in his recent address, noting damage to Russian logistics and headquarters. Additionally, Ukraine has conducted attacks inside Russia and Russian-occupied Crimea. The counteroffensive operations launched in early June have resulted in gains in eastern and southern regions, despite the challenging conditions of heavily mined and destroyed areas.

Pray: for peace that will come with a full withdrawal of the Russian invaders. Pray for protection for the Ukrainian forces, and for strength and safety in their efforts. (Psalm 144:1)

More: apple.news/Ay4Hgchs9RGKHAR_na3zw9Q

Russia: Navalny loses appeal against 19-year jail term

Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny has lost his appeal against a 19-year prison term, which was added to his existing sentence last month. The ruling was upheld by a Moscow court, with the proceedings closed to the media except for the reading of the verdict. Navalny, considered the most prominent figure in Russia's opposition movement, has been seen as a symbol of hope for many, with supporters likening him to Nelson Mandela. His political movement has been banned, and key figures have either been jailed or forced to flee the country as part of a government crackdown on dissent. His latest sentence was imposed on charges related to alleged 'extremist activity', which he denies. He was already serving an 11-and-a-half-year sentence on fraud charges, which he also described as politically motivated. Navalny's appeal rejection comes despite international admiration for his return to Russia after being poisoned with a nerve agent in Siberia, an act he attributes to the Kremlin. The Russian government has sought to diminish Navalny's political significance and portrays him as an extremist and a puppet of foreign intelligence agencies.

Pray: for justice and protection for Alexey Navalny and all those facing oppression. May God grant them strength and deliverance. (Psalm 82:3-4)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/26/russias-navalny-loses-appeal-against-19-year-jail-term

Worldwide

Iraq: 100+ dead in wedding blaze

A fire at a Christian wedding celebration in Iraq's Nineveh province, near Mosul, has resulted in over 100 deaths and at least 150 injuries. The blaze reportedly started after fireworks were lit during the celebration. Witnesses reported that the bride and groom survived, contrary to initial reports. The fire broke out in a large events hall, with up to 900 people in attendance. The building, made of highly flammable construction materials, quickly collapsed. Preliminary findings suggest that the hall's exterior was decorated with illegal, highly flammable cladding. Ambulances and medical crews were dispatched to the site, and efforts are being made to provide relief to those affected. The number of Christians in Iraq has significantly decreased in recent years, with the current estimate at 150,000 compared to 1.5 million in 2003.

Pray: for all those affected by this shocking tragedy in Iraq, praying for comfort and healing. (Psalm 34:18)

More: news.sky.com/story/at-least-100-people-are-dead-in-fire-at-wedding-celebration-in-iraq-12970705

Canada: Trudeau calls Nazi standing ovation 'deeply embarrassing'

Prime minister Justin Trudeau has apologised for giving a standing ovation to a war veteran who served in the Nazi Waffen-SS during Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's visit to Canada. Yaroslav Hunka, a 98-year-old Ukrainian veteran, was applauded by the House of Commons, who were unaware of his Nazi past. House speaker Anthony Rota later apologised for introducing him for applause, calling it a mistake. Trudeau condemned Rota's actions and described the incident as deeply embarrassing for the parliament of Canada and all Canadians. Jewish and Holocaust education organisations raised concerns about the celebration of a Nazi veteran. Rota, who accepted full responsibility for his actions, extended his apologies to Jewish communities in Canada and around the world. The incident occurred after Volodymyr Zelenskiy delivered a speech seeking support from Western allies. Hunka's Nazi unit has been accused of committing crimes against Polish and Jewish civilians during the Holocaust.

Pray: for forgiveness, understanding, and healing in the aftermath of this deeply troubling incident. (James 4:17)

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/trudeau-zelensky-nazi-ovation-embarrassment-b2418720.html

Niger: Macron orders military exit

French president Emmanuel Macron has announced the withdrawal of French troops from Niger and the repatriation of the French ambassador, following a military coup in the country. He stated that France would end its military cooperation with the de facto authorities in Niger, citing their lack of commitment to fighting terrorism. The decision comes after weeks of tensions with the junta and a deteriorating situation. Macron specified that the soldiers stationed in Niger would return to France in an orderly manner over the coming weeks and months, with the goal of completing the withdrawal by the end of the year. The announcement was met with joy in Niamey, the capital of Niger, as thousands of people rallied in support. Macron's decisions were made in coordination with Nigerian president Mohamed Bazoum, who remains under house arrest, and leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Pray: for peace, democracy and a return to stability in Niger. Pray that God will guide and protect its people. (Psalm 29:11)

More: www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2023/09/25/macron-ultimately-orders-military-exit-from-niger_6139592_7.html

Azerbaijan arrest as exodus tops 50,000

Azerbaijan has arrested former Nagorno-Karabakh leader Ruben Vardanyan as he attempted to flee into Armenia amidst a mass exodus of ethnic Armenians. Azerbaijan recently regained control of Karabakh in a rapid offensive, causing widespread displacement and a humanitarian crisis. The region, internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, has a predominantly ethnic Armenian population. Azerbaijan claims it wants peaceful reintegration and guarantees of civic rights, but faces accusations of ethnic cleansing as thousands of Armenians have fled in fear. The EU and Germany have expressed concern and called for international observers, and the UN has called for an investigation into alleged violations of the right to life. Vardanyan's arrest comes as Azerbaijan seeks to prosecute separatist leaders. The situation highlights Russia's diminished role as a security guarantor in the Caucasus region, with competing influences from Turkey, Iran, and the United States. As a result of the crisis, the current leader has said that the enclave will officially cease to exist with effect from 1 January 2024: [see https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-66945481](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-66945481)

Pray: for peace, protection, and justice for the people affected by the conflict. (Psalm 34:14)

More: www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/tens-thousands-ethnic-armenians-rush-flee-nagorno-karabakh-2023-09-27/

Gaza-Israel tensions spiral

After twelve days of closure, the border crossing from the Gaza Strip into Israel was reopened at dawn on 28 September, causing thousands of Gazans to sleep overnight as they awaited the chance to resume the work for which they are authorised. It was the news which Amjad Hassan, a builder who is the sole breadwinner for 13 relatives had been praying for. 'We work on a daily wage; if we don't work, we don't feed our families', he explained. The border closure followed renewed demonstrations as young Palestinians have confronted Israeli soldiers, with the approval or even encouragement of Hamas, which controls the enclave. Protesters have burnt tyres, thrown stones and explosive devices, and released incendiary balloons and kites into southern Israel. There is a perception that Hamas is trying to distract attention from its own economic woes and also to gain leverage in indirect talks with Israel, being led by Egypt, Qatar, and the UN.

Pray: for the tensions to be resolved, and for a positive outcome to the indirect talks. (Ephesians 4:31)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-66950112

Haiti: Kenyan police to confront gangs

Kenya has pledged to lead a multinational security force in Haiti, responding to a plea from that country's prime minister. Haiti has suffered from gang violence for decades, but the violence has escalated since the assassination of the president in 2021. Kenya will send a thousand police, aiming to lead a force which will neutralise the armed gangs, protect civilians, and bring about peace, security and order. A number of other countries are expected to contribute security personnel. The force will have to confront armed gangs who control, or regularly terrorise, swathes of the capital Port-au-Prince, and often outgun the local police. Critics doubt the ability of the Kenyan police to take on these gangs in a very different environment, not least because of a language barrier (Haiti is predominantly French-speaking).

Pray: that this intervention will be successful in fighting the lawlessness in Haiti. (Isaiah 60:18)

More: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-66946156>

Australia: World Prayer Assembly

Churches and prayer and mission ministries across Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands are planning to come together in Perth from 3 to 6 October, in unprecedented unity that has not been seen for decades, with the vision 'A New Wave of Glory to cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea' (Habakkuk 2:14). We are invited to attend, to pray, to watch online, and / or to give. For those who are unable to travel there will be livestreams of the plenary sessions. More information, including how to donate to this vision, from the website.

Pray: that there will indeed be a wave of glorious, effective prayer. (1 Thessalonians 1: 16-18)

More: world.prayerassembly.org/

Antarctica heatwave linked to climate change

Following last week's [article about Antarctica](#), a recent study has linked a world-record heatwave there to climate change. In March 2022 temperatures in an area of east Antarctica, known as 'Dome C', reached -10°C, 39°C above normal. It was the most intense heatwave ever recorded on the planet. The study identified a 'highly unusual' weather pattern that brought warm and moist air from Australia, intensifying the heatwave. Climate change made the heatwave 2°C worse. This event raises concerns that climate change is impacting Antarctica, which was once considered relatively shielded. Scientists say that these heatwaves, which occur naturally to some extent, will become even hotter due to climate change. They have also warned of rising sea levels and the potential for Antarctica to stop acting as a refrigerant for the planet and start 'acting as a radiator'. The study was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Geophysical Research Letters*.

Pray: for wisdom, action, and stewardship in addressing climate change. Pray for God to guide the nations in caring for His creation. (Genesis 2:15)

More: news.sky.com/story/cause-of-antarctica-heatwave-revealed-after-temperatures-soared-39c-above-normal-12969629

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