

Prayer Alert

ISSUE 41-2023 | Friday 13 October 2023
www.prayer-alert.net | editor@prayer-alert.net

You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; You encourage them, and You listen to their cry, (Psalm 10:17)

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

[Give thanks for Loren Cunningham](#)
[Türkiye: first new church in 100 years](#)
[Box office success for Christian film](#)

Europe

[Poland: bitter election campaign splits country](#)
[Russia seeks to freeze Ukraine's counteroffensive](#)

British Isles

[British royals condemn Hamas attacks as terrorism](#)
[Antisemitic incidents quadruple since Hamas attack](#)
[Scotland: legalising assisted suicide would open 'Pandora's Box'](#)
[Labour promise gay conversion ban with 'no loopholes'](#)
[Convicted criminals could avoid jail because prisons are full](#)
[Northern Ireland: PSNI sends advice by text](#)

Worldwide

[Israel / Hamas conflict: ongoing war](#)
[Israel / Hamas conflict: what to pray for](#)
[Middle East churches' symposium ahead of COP28](#)
[India: bank agents steal money from customers](#)
[Afghanistan: two earthquakes within a week](#)
[Algeria: church leader convicted](#)
[Guatemala: continuing protests after presidential election result](#)

Praise Reports

[Give thanks for Loren Cunningham](#)

Loren Cunningham, the founder of Youth With A Mission (YWAM), passed away at 88 on 6 October. He holds the unique distinction of being the first person to journey to every sovereign nation, dependent territory, and over 100 other regions, fulfilling the Great Commission's call. He revolutionised missions by enabling young people to serve globally, short-term, interdenominationally, and without pay. YWAM, founded in 1960, has expanded to reach every nation through evangelism, training, and mercy missions. Despite its status as one of the world's largest mission movements, Loren always attributed its success to Jesus. Under his leadership, YWAM launched global initiatives like King's Kids International, the University of the Nations, and YWAM Ships. He leaves behind a profound legacy, inspiring generations to continue his mission of spreading God's love worldwide.

Praise: You, Lord, for Loren Cunningham's dedication to spreading the message of your love globally. (Matthew 28:19-20)

More: ywam.org/about-us/our-founders

[Türkiye: first new church in 100 years](#)

On 11 October, a long-awaited day, St Ephrem Church in Istanbul was opened - the first Christian place of worship to be built in Türkiye in a hundred years. Around 20,000 Syriac Orthodox live in the metropolis, but until now they had only one church. Archbishop Yusuf Cetin said: 'At some big ceremonies, more than half of the congregation stood outside. That is difficult when it is very cold or very hot. That's why in 2010 years ago we visited the president and the prime minister and started a dialogue.' Following this, the congregation was allocated a plot of land and bureaucratic hurdles were overcome. These included a court case with the Catholic community in the area. However, if you ask the Catholics in Istanbul today, there is no longer any talk of a dispute. The building of the church is a historic event, says Fr Claudio Monge: 'Not only all Christians, but also all those who have worked for an inclusive country that respects diversity and considers it an enrichment, can only rejoice!'

Praise: God for this historic moment. Pray that other Christian communities without a church building will be encouraged to apply for permission to do likewise. (1 Peter 2:5)

More: www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2023-10/turkey-first-church-syriac-orthodox-mor-st-ephrem-istanbul.html

Box office success for Christian film

Sound of Freedom is a film whose director, producer, and main star are all Catholics. Inspired by a true story about child trafficking, it emphasises themes of piety and divine calling. The plot follows a security agent who rescues a boy from ruthless traffickers, only to discover that the boy's sister remains in captivity. He quits his job and embarks on a treacherous journey into the Colombian jungle to save her, risking his life for a noble cause. As his sense of purpose intensifies, he is portrayed with a saintly aura, delivering messages like 'God's children are not for sale'. The film has been praised for avoiding certain clichés often associated with 'Christian' movies. It has found success at the box office, ranking second behind Mission Impossible in its opening week. Its strong message resonates with audiences and highlights the importance of combating child trafficking while staying true to one's faith and convictions. For more information, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sound_of_Freedom_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sound_of_Freedom_(film))

Praise: God for those who creatively campaign against trafficking; may He bless their efforts. Pray for freedom and refuge for the victims of child trafficking. (Proverbs 31:8-9)

More: international.la-croix.com/news/culture/sound-of-freedom-and-its-very-christian-message/18157

British Isles

British royals condemn Hamas attacks as terrorism

The British royal family has publicly condemned Hamas as terrorists and expressed their dismay at the attacks on Israel. King Charles and the Prince and Princess of Wales have all criticised the group's actions. The comments come as the BBC faces pressure to refer to Hamas as terrorists rather than militants. The controversy regarding this reluctance has sparked debate among political figures and former executives. The BBC has defended its stance, stating that using the term 'terrorist' could compromise journalistic impartiality. Critics argue that by not using the term, the BBC is taking sides, and claim that it fails to accurately report acts of terrorism and war crimes. Despite the debate, the royal family remains focused on supporting interfaith and inter-community dialogue and promoting peace and understanding in challenging times. The King has a history of engaging in peace efforts in the region, including visits to Israel and the West Bank.

Pray: that God will grant wisdom, discernment and peace amid conflict. Pray for guidance and understanding among leaders. (Psalm 34:14)

More: www.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2023/10/11/charles-israel-gaza-palestinian-muslim-king/

Antisemitic incidents quadruple since Hamas attack

Antisemitic incidents in the UK have surged enormously since the Hamas attack on Israel, with 89 'anti-Jewish hate' cases reported from 7 to 10 October, compared to 21 during the same period last year. There have been six assaults, three instances of property damage, and 66 cases of abusive behaviour, including 22 online. Examples included a Jewish person being verbally attacked with anti-Semitic slurs while walking to a synagogue in London, and the occupants of a car outside a London synagogue shouting threats like 'Death to Israel' while waving a Palestinian flag. Security minister Tom Tugendhat expressed grave concern, likening Hamas's ideology to that of the Nazis and calling for measures to combat hate speech. Home secretary Suella Braverman has urged increased police patrols to prevent further incidents. Jewish schools in London and Manchester have heightened security, with some students advised not to wear blazers in public to avoid being easily identified as Jewish.

Pray: for peace, unity, and protection for the Jewish community facing rising antisemitism. (Psalm 121:7-8)

More: www.bbc.com/news/uk-67085625

Scotland: legalising assisted suicide would open 'Pandora's Box'

New assisted suicide legislation in Scotland would open a 'Pandora's Box', according to disability policy advisor Dr Miro Griffiths. He says that the proposals being brought forward by Liam McArthur MSP 'represent a dangerous idea that would see the vulnerable and marginalised in society placed at risk of irreversible harm'. Dr Griffiths spoke about his own experience of living with disabilities: 'My strength, respiratory functioning, and swallowing will continue to deteriorate. I require a power wheelchair, 24-hour personal assistance, and various medical interventions every day. I hope readers will realise that I, and many others in my community, approach this issue in a way that others in society will not.' Canada legalised assisted suicide and euthanasia in 2016; within five years, the law was expanded and key safeguards were removed. There has been a tenfold rise in assisted suicides since the law was changed. Dr Griffiths concluded by saying that a change in the law was simply too dangerous, especially in the context of stretched public services.

Pray: for Godly wisdom and compassion in Scotland's decision on assisted suicide, guarding against harm, protecting the sanctity of life. (Proverbs 31:8)

More: care.org.uk/news/2023/10/scotland-legalising-assisted-suicide-would-open-pandoras-box

Labour promise gay conversion ban with 'no loopholes'

The Labour Party has pledged to introduce comprehensive legislation to ban gay conversion therapy without any loopholes if it wins the upcoming general election. The Government has faced delays in announcing its own plans for a ban, partly due to concerns from various religious groups about potential impacts on their practices. Shadow equalities secretary Anneliese Dodds has denounced conversion therapy as abuse and criticised the delay in banning it. Many church leaders have expressed support for banning specific conversion therapy practices but are concerned that a full ban might hinder their ability to pray with individuals experiencing unwanted same-sex attraction. They cite an example from Australia where similar legislation led to challenges to church teachings and prayer practices.

Pray: for wisdom to those leading our country. Pray that as His Church, we may create safe places for all people and provide the support they need. (Mark 12:31)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/labour-promise-gay-conversion-ban-with-no-loopholes

Convicted criminals could avoid jail because prisons are full

Judges in England and Wales have been instructed to delay sentencing hearings due to overcrowded prisons. There are concerns that convicted criminals may avoid jail time because of the lack of available prison space. Lord Edis, the senior presiding judge, has directed that sentencing for individuals on bail should be postponed, starting next week. The Government is also considering early releases as a measure to manage the growing prison population. The prison system is operating under intense pressure, with projections indicating that the population will exceed the number of operational prison places by November. Shadow justice secretary Shabana Mahmood criticised the government's handling of the prison system, labelling it a 'damning indictment'. Security minister Tom Tugendhat emphasised that those convicted of serious crimes would still go to prison for extended periods, citing the government's commitment to increasing prison capacity. The government is even exploring the possibility of renting prison cells overseas to address overcrowding.

Pray: that God will guide our justice system to find compassionate yet just solutions for overcrowded prisons. Let justice and mercy prevail. (Micah 6:8)

More: news.sky.com/story/convicted-criminals-could-avoid-jail-because-prisons-are-full-12982756

Northern Ireland: PSNI sends advice by text

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has sent texts to nearly two thousand individuals whose phone numbers were discovered during drug raids. These texts contain advice on substance misuse and aim to address the growing demand for illicit drugs in Northern Ireland. Drug seizures and drug-related arrests have both increased by 10% this year. The PSNI's recent focus has been on the supply of Class A and Class B drugs through social media apps and groups. This trend has transformed the drugs market in Northern Ireland over the past few years. Paramilitary groups are working closely with organised crime groups to import and distribute drugs: about sixty criminal gangs currently operate in the region. The PSNI is working with national and international law enforcement partners to target suppliers and supply lines. It is also collaborating with Border Force to prevent drug smuggling through Northern Ireland's ports.

Pray: for healing for those ensnared by addiction and the grip of drug misuse in Northern Ireland. Guide law enforcement to disrupt drug supply and provide support. (Psalm 34:18)

More: www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-67069575

Europe

Poland: bitter election campaign splits country

In the old shipyard in Gdansk, where striking workers were once the catalyst for major political change, young Poles now worry that the rights and freedoms won by the Solidarity movement over three decades ago are at risk, as the ruling right-wing Law and Justice party (PiS) campaigns to secure a record third term in office. Critics point to the shrinking independence of the courts under PiS and backsliding on women's rights, including a near-total ban on abortion. There is also concern about media freedom - publicly-funded TV becoming a government mouthpiece - as well as acrimonious wrangling with Brussels on issues from judicial reform to migration. Many Poles regard the election on 15 October as the most important since 1989, when Solidarity candidates swept the board in the first partially-free vote since communist rule. In such a polarised race, much of the campaigning has been nasty: opposition leader Donald Tusk has referred to the government as evil and called the prime minister Pinocchio. Mateusz Morawiecki's party consistently claims that Tusks's party represents 'foreign interests', painting him as a traitor and a stooge of Berlin. Opinion polls put PiS narrowly ahead - though possibly without a large enough majority to form a government.

Pray: for the outcome of this election to be in the best interests of the country's future. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-67065204

Russia seeks to freeze Ukraine's counteroffensive

In the 85th week of the war, Russia is trying to freeze Kyiv's four-month-old counteroffensive which has succeeded in wresting back half the territory captured earlier this year and depriving Russia of control of the western Black Sea. On 6 October Russian forces resumed an offensive effort against the city of Kupyansk: they are also attempting to capture Avdiivka, an eastern city which they have surrounded to the north and south. These tactical operations aimed to stop what has been a slow but steady Ukrainian advance, ahead of the Russian presidential elections. Despite these attacks, Ukraine seems to be pressing on with the counteroffensive. Meanwhile, two Ukrainian brothers have been accused of responsibility for organising the Russian missile strike on a shop and café in the village of Hroza, also on 6 October, which killed 55 civilians out of a population of 350: see <https://www.politico.eu/article/hroza-ukraien-russia-missile-attack-brothers/>

Pray: that the Ukrainian forces will be able to continue their advance. Pray for safety for all those on or near the front line. (Matthew 5:9)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/11/russia-tries-to-stop-ukraines-counteroffensive-before-winter

Worldwide

Israel / Hamas conflict: ongoing war

On 12 October, Israel said there would be no humanitarian break to its 'total siege' of the Gaza Strip until all its hostages were freed, even though the Red Cross pleaded for fuel to be allowed in to prevent overwhelmed hospitals from 'turning into morgues'. Israel has vowed to annihilate the Hamas movement which rules Gaza, in retribution for the deadly attack on 7 October, when hundreds of gunmen poured across the barrier fence and rampaged through Israeli towns. The death toll in Israel is at least 1,300, with more than 2,700 injured and about 150 taken hostage: in Gaza it is at least 1,400, with over 5,600 wounded. The only power station in the enclave has run out of fuel, and already some 340,000 have been made homeless by Israel's bombing campaign. Hamas militants holding Israeli soldiers and civilians hostage have threatened to execute a captive for each home in Gaza hit without warning. Meanwhile, Israel has shelled towns in southern Lebanon in response to a fresh rocket attack by Hezbollah: see <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-reports-cross-border-fire-lebanon-where-residents-say-israeli-shelling-2023-10-11/>

Pray: that a wave of prayer will be mobilised, both by individuals and churches, in the knowledge that prayer makes a difference. (James 5:16)

More: www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-hamas-war-latest-news-2023-10-12/

Israel / Hamas conflict: what to pray for

On 12 October, Israel said there would be no humanitarian break to its 'total siege' of the Gaza Strip until all its hostages were freed, after the Red Cross pleaded for fuel to be allowed in to prevent overwhelmed hospitals from 'turning into morgues'. Israel has vowed to annihilate the Hamas movement which rules Gaza, in retribution for the deadly attack on 7 October, when hundreds of gunmen poured across the barrier fence and rampaged through Israeli towns. The death toll in Israel is at least 1,300, with more than 2,700 injured and about 150 taken hostage: in Gaza it is at least 1,400, with over 5,600 wounded. The only power station in the enclave has run out of fuel, and already some 340,000 have been made homeless by Israel's bombing campaign. Hamas militants holding Israeli soldiers and civilians hostage have threatened to execute a captive for each home in Gaza hit without warning. Meanwhile, Israel has shelled towns in southern Lebanon in response to a fresh rocket attack by Hezbollah: see <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-reports-cross-border-fire-lebanon-where-residents-say-israeli-shelling-2023-10-11/>

Pray: that somehow this savage conflict will quickly be brought to a halt, and that humanitarian aid will be allowed into the Gaza Strip. (John 16:33)

More: www.ipcprayer.org/ipc-connections/item/16586-prayer-call-for-israel-at-war-with-hamas.html

Middle East churches' symposium ahead of COP28

Dave Bookless of A Rocha writes: 'On 4-5 October I spoke at a symposium on "Ecumenical Perspectives on Climate Change" held in Beirut by the Middle East Council of Churches. It was remarkable to see all the diverse cardinals, metropolitans, bishops and archimandrites, and hundreds of robed and bearded priests and seminary students, all coming together to address creation care. All the churches of the region were represented - an amazing witness to Christian unity. The whole event was televised across the Middle East. Amazingly, all the Churches of the Middle East have agreed to a joint statement and call to action which will be presented at COP28, due to be held in Dubai at the end of November.'

Pray: that this remarkable display of church unity will have a positive influence on COP28. (Psalm 24:1)

More: <https://arocha.org/en/an-a-rocha-international-response-to-latest-ipcc-report/>

India: bank agents steal money from customers

An exposé has shown that the Bank of Baroda made it simple and easy for its agents to steal money from customers' accounts - and some of them did. The bank's employees had linked unauthorised mobile numbers to accounts before uploading them onto the bank's new mobile app. These numbers were of bank staff, managers, guards, their relatives, and bank agents in remote areas. Internal documents show that some of the bank's agents withdrew tens of thousands of rupees from customers' accounts. The bank's head office has asked the managers concerned to do everything necessary to restore the money to the accounts. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has ordered an audit, and has told the bank to stop registering new customers on its app.

Pray: that the bank's customers will all have their money returned, the guilty agents will be punished, and steps taken to prevent such actions being repeated. (Isaiah 1:17)

More: www.aljazeera.com/economy/2023/10/12/indias-bank-of-baroda-expose-worsens-agents-steal-money-from-accounts

Afghanistan: two earthquakes within a week

A 6.3 magnitude earthquake has struck western Afghanistan, four days after a series of deadly quakes left at least a thousand people dead. This second earthquake struck an area near Herat early on 10 October. There are conflicting reports about the number of casualties: one spokesperson reported at least 120 injured. It flattened all 700 homes in Chahak village, which was untouched by Saturday's quakes. Rescue workers and volunteers have been working around the clock to try to dig out survivors and bodies from the ruins of the villages since the weekend. Relief efforts have been hampered by poor infrastructure in the impoverished country, following decades of war and a decline in foreign aid.

Pray: for strength and perseverance for the rescue teams, and for help to reach all those affected quickly. (2 Cor 1:3-4)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/11/afghanistan-hit-by-second-strong-earthquake-in-days

Algeria: church leader convicted

Church leader Rev Youssef Ourahmane has been convicted of holding an unauthorised religious assembly and sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine equivalent to approximately £600. He is vice-president of the Église Protestante d'Algérie (EPA), an association of around 45 Algerian churches which have been suffering under a severe crackdown that began in 2017. Many EPA-affiliated churches have been forced to close. In March 2023 a small number of Christian families spent three days in a church compound under Rev Youssef's supervision. The small church in the compound had been sealed by order of the provincial governor in 2019. The pastor was charged with holding an unauthorised religious assembly and holding worship in a building not permitted for worship. He was convicted in absentia and was not informed of the court hearing or the verdict until mid-September. He has appealed the verdict: a hearing date has been set for 19 November.

Pray: for justice to be done, and for the government to reconsider its policy of closing churches. (Matthew 5:10)

More: www.churchinchains.ie/news-by-country/north-africa/algeria/algeria-church-leader-sentenced-to-two-years-in-prison/

Guatemala: continuing protests after presidential election result

Tension is rising in Guatemala, where protests by supporters of president-elect Bernardo Arévalo have run into a second week. They are demanding the resignation of attorney-general Consuelo Porras, who they accuse of plotting to prevent Mr Arévalo from taking office. He won the presidential election by a landslide in August, but just hours later his party was suspended by the supreme electoral tribunal - a move widely viewed as an attempt to stop Mr Arévalo, a political outsider who has campaigned against corruption, from being sworn in as planned. Ms Porras argues that the party was not properly registered, but critics point out that she only launched her investigation after Mr Arévalo secured a spot in the run-off. The protests intensified last week as demonstrators blocked key roads across the country, causing fuel and food shortages and paralysing traffic. The outgoing president, Alejandro Giammattei, condemned the blockades, and asked Mr Arévalo to sit down with mediators sent by the Organisation of American States (OAS), to ensure a peaceful handover of power.

Pray: that Mr Arévalo will be allowed to become president, and for the country to regain peace and stability. (Amos 5:24)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-67064814

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.