



# PRAYER ALERT...

An initiative of the Prayer Association of the British Isles & Ireland  
[www.prayer-alert.net](http://www.prayer-alert.net) [editor@prayer-alert.net](mailto:editor@prayer-alert.net)

Issue 3206

Website

Contact Us

Donations

Friday 25 August 2006

## ■ British Isles & Ireland

- [UK must tackle ethnic tensions](#)
- [Bishop rebukes hospital decision to lay-off Chaplains](#)
- [UK visit extended by prominent Chinese House Church preacher](#)
- [Algerian terror suspect has lost his appeal against Home Office](#)
- [Warning over Muslim profiling](#)
- [Bible Society to launch evangelistic outreach with BBC's 'Miracles of Jesus'](#)

## ■ Europe

- [Pressure mounts on EU to make firm Lebanon commitments](#)
- [Christian radio outlets in Russia forced off air](#)

## ■ Worldwide

- [Bloodshed continues in Sri Lanka](#)
- [Ethiopian floods worsen](#)
- [Talks urged on Iran nuclear issue](#)
- [Push to boost UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, and to give aid access](#)
- [Christians in India fear massive hate campaign will lead to violence](#)
- [Chinese human rights lawyer detained](#)

## ■ Praise Reports

- [Indonesian three death threat lifted](#)
- [Papua New Guinea seeks to heal the past](#)

## BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

### ■ UK must tackle ethnic tensions

Tensions between people of different ethnic groups and faiths in British society must be tackled, says Communities Secretary Ruth Kelly. Ms Kelly launched a Commission on Integration and Cohesion, calling for a 'new and honest' debate on diversity. The body, which will start work next month, will look at how communities in England tackle tensions and extremism. But Ms Kelly says it will not look at whether faith schools are a good thing as parents should have a choice. The government is aware that society is fragmenting into tribes - but if they are talking about creating common values for different faith groups, what are they? The government plans to have more faith schools but critics say they increase segregation between people of different beliefs. Ms Kelly said Church of England Schools were among the most 'diverse' in the country. And she said Muslim parents should not be denied the same opportunities offered to Christians and Jews in sending their children to faith schools.

**Pray:** for God's spirit to direct decisions made and that initiatives will not be headline grabbers.

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/5280230.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5280230.stm)

### ■ Bishop rebukes hospital decision to lay-off Chaplains

One Church of England bishop has reacted with outrage at proposals by the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust to make six chaplains redundant. The Bishop of Worcester, the Rt Rev Peter Selby, called the decision 'a piece of destruction', according to the Church of England newspaper. The cut-backs are part of a re-structuring within the Trust, which is trying to overcome a £30 million deficit in its budget. John Rostill, the Chief Executive of the Trust admitted that some of the actions would cause distress, but he said there was an absolute need to maintain frontline clinical services, which must remain 'paramount'. In the redundancies, two Anglican chaplains, three Roman Catholics and a Methodist will lose their positions, and will mean that just one chaplain will now cover all three hospitals in Worcestershire. Bishop Selby told BBC Radio 4: "The hospital — and that means your health and the health of the country — is in the hands of the accountants. Individually they may be as caring as any of us. But in the task they have undertaken they leave their humanity at the door as they undertake the 'big project'," he said.

**Pray:** that in the race to save money the authorities will not forget the full needs of body, soul and spirit, for patients and staff.

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/news/ministries/bishop.rebukes.hospital.decision.to.lay.off.chaplains/749.htm>

### ■ UK visit extended by prominent Chinese House Church preacher

Deborah Xu, one of the foremost female Chinese Christian preachers, has extended her visit to the UK until 24 September 2006. Deborah will be speaking at the Don't Stand In Silence road shows to highlight the plight of the persecuted church worldwide. Deborah was a full time minister in China during the murderous years of the Cultural Revolution. She spent years on the run from the Chinese authorities whilst still preaching the gospel. She was frequently imprisoned and subjected to harsh treatment and torture. Deborah describes how she and her fellow believers could only persevere by being constantly ready to die for their faith. Christian Solidarity says: 'Deborah has already been an inspiration to thousands during her stay in the UK, both because of her testimony and her passion. We are delighted that she has extended her visit to share her story with more people.'

**Pray:** that Deborah's story will motivate those who hear it to be a voice for those who suffer for their faith in China and throughout the world today.

**More:** <http://www.csw.org.uk/latestnews/article.php?id=542>

### ■ Algerian terror suspect has lost his appeal against Home Office

The man, known only as 'Y', was considered a danger to national security by the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (Siac). The ruling indicated the panel felt improvements had been made within the Algerian regime. The decision will affect the government's plans to deport 15 other Algerians on security grounds. Y had argued sending him back to Algeria would breach his human rights. Home Secretary John Reid said he was happy with the Siac decision. However, human rights campaigners were disappointed with the ruling. 'Amnesty International has extensively documented the persistence of torture of people thought to possess information about terrorism by Algerian security forces. Given the extensive evidence before the Siac that 'Y' would face a real risk of torture if deported to Algeria, today's decision can only be described as an affront to justice and wrong.' Lawyers for 'Y' have until 29 September to submit an appeal.

**Pray:** Proverbs 31: Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5280658.stm>

### ■ Warning over Muslim profiling

The continued profiling of Asians in Britain would lead to further tension among Muslims in British society, the Bishop of Barking warned. He also insisted that disillusioned Islamic radicals should be encouraged by their leaders to pursue legitimate political means to their ends rather than carry out destructive acts of terrorism. 'I think that if security at airports and transport centres does become observably targeted towards Muslims that will in time become a real issue of anger.' The situation could soon be 'a difficult thing to manage,' he warned but acknowledged that for the time being such specific searches were advisable. If searches are to continue, he said, it must be a mutual decision involving all parties. 'Decisions to do targeted searches and heighten security among young Muslims should be discussed very carefully with Muslim leaders at every level,' he said. For more insights check out what integration should mean on [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/5280244.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5280244.stm)

**Pray:** for our Church leaders to dialogue with Muslim communities across the country as they strive for peace and justice.

**More:** [http://www.churchnewspaper.com/news.php?read=on&number\\_key=5834&title=Warning%20over%20Muslim%20profiling](http://www.churchnewspaper.com/news.php?read=on&number_key=5834&title=Warning%20over%20Muslim%20profiling)

### ■ Bible Society to launch evangelistic outreach with BBC's 'Miracles of Jesus'

The Bible Society is taking advantage of the BBC's series 'The Miracle of Jesus', with a new evangelistic outreach into schools and churches, including an array of resources to supplement the programmes. The Miracles of Jesus was aired on BBC 1 on 6, 13 and 20 August. (See Prayer Alert 2706) The Bible Society has commissioned extensive classroom and church resources to be released for the autumn. They are making the series available on DVD, together with specially commissioned materials for GCSE and A-Level students. Other resources will also be made available online including printable downloads. Commenting on the series, Captain Jim Currin, Executive Secretary of 'Group for Evangelisation', a body within the Churches Together in England, said, it is a bold experiment which I think works well, giving Christians a valuable opportunity to talk about our Christian faith in natural conversation.'

**Pray:** for teachers, students and congregations as they come into contact with this resource.

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/news/ministries/bible.society.to.launch.evangelistic.outreach.with.bbc.miracles.of.jesus/746.htm>

## EUROPE

### ■ Pressure mounts on EU to make firm Lebanon commitments

A hastily-convened meeting of top level EU ambassadors produced little by way of progress on European contributions to a Lebanon force on Wednesday. The two main issues of the meeting – establishing what the rules of engagement should be and how many soldiers each participating country would send – have largely remained unanswered. It will now be up to EU foreign ministers meeting for an emergency session today, Friday, in the presence of UN secretary general Kofi Annan to

iron out the details and elicit firm promises. It is hoped that the presence of Mr Annan will make member states come to an agreement. The lack of outright agreement on Wednesday adds further to the picture that EU member states are in simple disarray over their response to Lebanon – with France having backed down from a leadership role and Italy saying it will commit up to 3,000 troops but only on condition that Israeli soldiers stop shooting.

**Pray:** for the EU foreign ministers and Kofi Annan as they meet that there will be agreement that will lead to the formation of a peacekeeping force for Lebanon.

**More:** <http://euobserver.com/9/22258>

#### ■ **Christian radio outlets in Russia forced off air**

Nearly all radio outlets affiliated with New Life Radio (NLR), a Russian satellite network operated by Christian Radio for Russia, have been forced off the air temporarily. All but two of nearly 100 outlets have been affected by an unexpected forced move to another Russian satellite, reported HCJB World Radio last Friday. HCJB is the principal partner of Christian Radio for Russia. 'This is due to the fact that the satellite distribution slots on the satellite we were using were all bought up by the Russian government,' said Mark Irwin, director of HCJB World Radio's Russia/Commonwealth of Independent States subregion. In late July, NLR learned it had to move from Eutelsat W4 – the main satellite that carries entertainment programs in Russia – to Intelsat 904 satellite in just a matter of days. Nearly 100 outlets will remain off air for as long as a year until each satellite dish can be modified to pick up signal from Intelsat. The dishes need to be repositioned and new reception equipment installed to receive signals.

**Pray:** for a speedy transition of the Christian radio stations to the new satellite and there would not delay in the spreading of God's word.(Heb 4: 12)

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/news/europe/christian.radio.outlets.in.russia.forced.off.air/619.htm>

## WORLDWIDE

#### ■ **Bloodshed continues in Sri Lanka**

The Tamil Tigers claim 61 teenage girls were killed when Sri Lankan air force bombed a compound. Government say the attack was aimed at rebel centre and had not deliberately targeted civilians. Tiger rebels retaliated with an attack on a diplomatic convoy killing seven. The Red Cross report that a 23 -year-old aid worker has been killed in the area.

**Pray:** for a just and lasting peace to come to this troubled island.

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/5271886.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5271886.stm)

#### ■ **Ethiopian floods worsen**

US troops have joined emergency rescue operations in Ethiopia where flash floods have killed hundreds of people and left tens of thousands homeless. In the south-west, herders marooned by the floods refused to be rescued by helicopter, Ethiopian forces say. Thousands of flood victims remain stranded in drastic circumstances in the south-west of Ethiopia, where the River Omo burst its banks. About 900 have died in the floods in several regions of Ethiopia in the past two weeks.

**Pray:** for those trying to get through to the stricken areas - and for the floods to recede.

**More:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/5267794.stm>

#### ■ **Talks urged on Iran nuclear issue**

Iran has offered 'serious talks' with six world powers, in response to a UN resolution which set a deadline of 31 August for the programme to be halted.

Western powers suspect Iran is trying to produce a nuclear bomb China and Russia have said negotiations are the only way of easing tension over Iran's nuclear programme, following Tehran's offer of talks on the issue. But France has insisted that talks can restart only if Tehran halts its uranium enrichment programme first.

**Pray:** for wisdom and moderation on the part of all nations involved in this issue, for the good of the region and beyond.

**More:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/5277080.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/5277080.stm)

#### ■ **Push to boost UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, and to give aid access**

Lebanon is strewn with the debris of the recent war. Renewed efforts are under way to build up troop numbers for an expanded UN peacekeeping force for Lebanon. 'We badly need to provide humanitarian aid to those people who will be returning home. They have nothing,' said Caritas Lebanon director

**Pray:** for the fragile peace to endure and aid supplies to get through. Pray also for Christian communities in Southern Lebanon, which have borne a heavy toll.

**More:** <http://www.christiantoday.com/news/middle-east/israel.pulls.troops.out.of.lebanon.aid.groups.move.in/482.htm>

#### ■ **Christians in India fear massive hate campaign will lead to violence**

A large anti-Christian hate campaign has been launched by the Hindu nationalist/anti-Christian BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) in Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh state).

The Washington-DC based human rights group, International Christian Concern (ICC) says that the BJP alleges that Christian missionaries are proselytizing in the town and are agitating followers against Christians in the Tirupati area where preaching of any other religion is 'banned'. 'Hindu fundamentalist groups have staged several rallies to highlight the alleged conversion activities of Christians inside the temple town. A huge protest march was initiated by local Hindu fundamentalist

groups on August 10,' says a media advisory obtained by ANS. A leader of the rally alleged: 'Christian missionaries are luring Hindus into Christianity by offering them bait in the form of food and shelter.' He also threatened that if conversions were not stopped, the anti Christian campaign would 'become more rigorous.'

**Pray:** for protection for Christians as they face increasing intimidation in this area.

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s06080062.htm>

#### ■ Chinese human rights lawyer detained

Chinese human rights lawyer, Mr. Gao Zhisheng, was removed from his sister's home in Shandong province, China and taken to an unknown location last week. His wife and two young children have been placed under house arrest. According to China Aid Association (CAA), Gao was abducted by a dozen Chinese security agents at 12 noon on August 15. A spokesperson for Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) in the UK, said, 'The Chinese official news agency later reported that the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Public Security confirmed that it had detained Gao for questioning. 'Mr. Gao, a Beijing lawyer, has previously been threatened by state security agents in connection with his defense work, which has included the case of prominent house church leader Pastor Cai. Gao has been subject to a number of attempts and threats on his life, including incidents involving attempted accidents with vehicles. In January a car with newspaper over its license plates abruptly stopped in front of him on the highway and then sped directly at him when he got out to investigate the situation. His wife and children have also received threats from security officers.'

**Pray:** that God will intervene and set the prisoner free. (Heb 13: 3)

**More:** <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s06080111.htm>

## PRAISE REPORTS

#### ■ Indonesian three death threat lifted

Thank you so much for praying and campaigning on behalf of the three Catholic Christians facing execution in Indonesia. The men, accused of masterminding the violence in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia in 2000, have been the subject of an intense international campaign over recent weeks and months. This campaign focuses on inconsistencies and concerns regarding their trial and has drawn support from the EU, Amnesty International and Pope Benedict XVI. The original date for the execution was delayed until after the 20th August following an international outcry. It now seems that the date has been delayed indefinitely following news of the postponement of the execution of the Bali bombers. Commentators have consistently linked the fate of the three men in Poso to the government's treatment of the three Muslim militants on death row for the 2002 Bali bombing. (See Prayer Alert 3106) (Ps 100: 4)

**Praise:** God for answered prayers but please continue to pray for their release. Pray for peace in the region and restraint by both Muslim and Christian communities. Thank you again for your support. We will keep you updated as the situation develops.

**More:** <http://www.csw.org.uk/latestnews/>

#### ■ Papua New Guinea seeks to heal the past

On 24th August 2006 a reconciliation event of special significance to the people of Papua New Guinea will occur on Mailu Island, in Amazon Bay east of Port Moresby. It will be held on the 400th anniversary of a massacre and kidnapping of people of that island by seamen under the command of Spanish explorer Torres. Before he discovered the strait named after him Torres spent time exploring and charting the south-east coast of Papua New Guinea. As part of those activities a massacre of some of the local Magi people occurred on Mailu Island, and the Spaniards kidnapped 14 local children between the ages of 4 and 10 years to 'Christianise' them. The current local Magi people are organising the reconciliation event and have invited the Spanish Ambassador in Canberra, the Prime Minister of PNG, and other dignitaries including bishops and church leaders to attend. Two women intercessors to represent Spain in identificational repentance are prepared to go (Maria from Spain, and Deborah from Sydney), as are people from the Cook Islands. (Eph 2: 14)

**Praise:** Let us pray that the Lord would oversee all arrangements, so that the necessary cleansing of the land and reconciliation may occur through the name and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**More:** [http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e\\_id=00000001044](http://ausprayernet.org.au/newsletter/DisplayNewsletter.php?e_id=00000001044)

## PRAYER ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

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 for written permission.

Prayer Alert is a partnership project of the Prayer Association of the British Isles and Ireland  
C/O World Prayer Centre, Cornerstone House, 5 Ethel Street, Birmingham, B2 4BG, England