

Prayer Alert

ISSUE 03-2026 | Friday 23 January 2026
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'My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations', says the Lord Almighty. (Malachi 1:11)

We are pleased to enclose this week's edition of Prayer Alert.

National elections: please pray for the parliamentary and general elections taking place in Myanmar (25th January).

Open Doors 2026 Watchlist

You may be interested to browse and pray over the 'World Watch List' - Open Doors' annual ranking of the fifty countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. [See here](#)



We invite the Prayer Alert community to join us on the free online Interseed House of Prayer app where we are praying and sharing thoughts on the weekly prayer guide issues and themes.

Interseed is available on the Android and iOS platforms. More info [HERE](#).

Invitation - to serve with the PA team!

Would you like to join our Prayer Alert team?

We are a group of volunteers based in different parts of England, India, and USA. If you appreciate what we do and are confident with browsing the internet, discovering relevant articles and basic editing, 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.

David Fletcher and the Prayer Alert team.

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Praise Reports

[Atheist filmmaker abandons unbelief for Jesus](#)

A growing spiritual awakening among Gen Z and Millennials is reflected in the testimony of filmmaker Michael Ray Lewis, a former atheist who has now turned to Christ. He says his unbelief was shaped by unanswered objections about evolution, evil, and judgment, reinforced by atheist media portraying Christianity as intellectually bankrupt. Determined to disprove his wife's renewed faith, he began attending church and revisiting Christian claims. What started as resistance slowly turned into curiosity as Lewis discovered thoughtful responses to his questions and positive evidence for God's existence. Scientific insights, particularly from astrophysics, challenged his assumption that faith and reason were incompatible. After several years, he realised that his remaining objections were rooted not in evidence but in unwillingness to believe. In 2016, he surrendered his life to Christ. Leaving behind his horror film career, he felt called to serve God creatively and produced the documentary Universe Designed, presenting compelling scientific and philosophical evidence for an intelligent Creator.

Praise: God for transformed minds and hearts, drawing searching generations to Christ through truth, evidence, and testimony. (Romans 1:20)
More: www.faithwire.com/2026/01/20/atheist-filmmaker-abandons-unbelief-for-jesus/

[USA: 'Victory for life': all charges dropped in abortion clinic case](#)

Six pro-life activists associated with the Red Rose Rescue movement are celebrating after all charges against them were dropped following a court hearing in Pennsylvania. The group had been arrested in July 2025 after intervening at an abortion clinic in Chester, actions they described as a peaceful 'rescue' aimed at offering alternatives to abortion and practical support to women and staff. The activists, who were charged with misdemeanour, trespass, and disorderly conduct, spent several days in custody before being released on bail. After they entered no-contest pleas, the court dismissed all charges, with no penalties imposed and bail money returned. During the proceedings, the defendants stated that their actions were motivated by Christian convictions, a belief in the dignity of every human life, and a desire to act non-violently on behalf of the unborn. They also referenced historic civil rights principles and the legacy of peaceful protest. The group expressed gratitude for legal support and for prayers offered, describing the outcome as a significant encouragement for those seeking to defend life with compassion, courage, and faith.

Praise: God for justice upheld, lives defended, and believers strengthened to act with love, courage, and conviction. (Proverbs 24:11–12)
More: www.christianpost.com/news/red-rose-rescuers-see-charges-dropped-in-abortion-trespass-case.html

British Isles

Chinese mega-embassy approved by Government despite security concerns

The Government has approved plans for a large new Chinese embassy near the Tower of London, ending years of debate over security concerns. The site, purchased by China in 2018 for over £200 million, would become the largest Chinese embassy in Europe. Ministers say national security has been their foremost consideration, stressing that intelligence agencies were involved throughout the process and that extensive mitigation measures are in place. However, critics across the political spectrum have condemned the decision. Conservative, Liberal Democrat, and Reform UK figures argue the embassy's size and location could increase the risk of espionage and intimidation, particularly toward dissidents living in the UK. MI5 has acknowledged that security risks cannot be entirely eliminated, though it judged the safeguards to be proportionate. Supporters of the decision say approving the embassy reflects pragmatic engagement with a major global power and helps maintain diplomatic dialogue on trade, security, and human rights. Opponents warn it sends the wrong signals about Britain's willingness to stand firm on national security and democratic values.

Pray: for vigilance, integrity, and discernment as UK leaders balance diplomacy, security, and the protection of freedom. (Psalm 127:1)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/cly4r20q1qyt

House of Lords backs ban on social media for under-16s

Momentum is growing in parliament for a ban on under-16s using social media, after the House of Lords backed a key amendment to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. The proposal would require social media platforms to implement highly effective age-verification systems within a year of the law passing. While the Government initially resisted an outright ban, pressure from opposition parties, bereaved parents, charities, and Labour backbenchers has softened its stance. Many peers cited evidence of harm to children's mental health, wellbeing, and development, sharing personal testimonies and research on the risks of excessive screen use. With similar restrictions already introduced in Australia, ministers are now consulting on how a UK ban might work in practice. The amendment now returns to the House of Commons, where overturning it could prove politically difficult. Government statements suggest action is increasingly likely, with a focus on helping children develop healthier relationships via phones and social media, while balancing evidence, parental concerns, and expert advice. A ban in some form now appears almost inevitable.

Pray: for protection over children, and for lawmakers to act with courage, clarity, and compassion. (Psalm 127:3)
More: news.sky.com/story/logging-off-kids-social-media-ban-now-feels-almost-certain-13497390

Inflation rises for first time in five months - but one-off factors blamed

UK inflation has risen for the first time in five months, increasing to 3.4% in the year to December. The rise, though higher than expected, is widely attributed to temporary factors rather than a sustained upward trend. The Office for National Statistics said higher airfares over the Christmas and New Year period were a major contributor, alongside increased tobacco prices following a Budget tax rise. Food prices also edged up, notably for bread, cereals, and vegetables, adding pressure on household budgets. Despite the increase, analysts believe inflation is likely to fall again in the coming months. The Bank of England, which ended 2025 by cutting interest rates to 3.75%, is expected to proceed cautiously when it meets in February, with gradual cuts anticipated later in the year. The Government says reducing the cost of living remains a priority, while critics blame high taxes and borrowing for continued pressure on families. Compared with European neighbours, UK inflation remains relatively high, though forecasts suggest a decline is likely soon.

Pray: for economic stability, fair pricing, and compassionate policies protecting households facing rising living costs nationwide. (Proverbs 22:7)
More: www.bbc.com/news/articles/cnvg251g25yo

Government launches £15bn Warm Homes Plan

The Government has launched a £15 billion Warm Homes Plan aimed at expanding solar power, heat pumps, and other green technologies across households over the next five years. The scheme seeks to triple the number of homes with solar panels while increasing uptake of low-carbon heating. It includes a mix of grants and low or zero-interest loans, available regardless of household income. The Boiler Upgrade Scheme will be extended until 2029/30, offering grants of up to £7,500 for air-source heat pumps. An additional £600 million has been allocated to fully fund solar panels and battery storage for low-income households. It is estimated that combining solar, battery storage, and heat pumps could save an average household up to £1,300 a year. The plan is also expected to boost demand for skilled installers, creating opportunities for green-tech businesses and workforce training. Ministers say the programme supports decarbonisation, energy security, and cost-of-living relief, though experts stress the importance of improving insulation alongside new technologies.

Pray: for responsible stewardship, reduced fuel poverty, and equitable access to technologies which protect households and creation. (Genesis 2:15)
More: www.greeneconomy.co.uk/news-and-resources/news/government-launches-15bn-warm-homes-plan-for-solar-and-green-tech-investments/

MPs debate removal of immunity provision from new legislation

MPs are debating plans to remove the immunity provision from legislation addressing unresolved crimes from the Northern Ireland Troubles. The Government is seeking approval for an order to overturn elements of the previous Legacy Act, including a scheme that would have granted immunity from prosecution to individuals involved in Troubles-related offences in exchange for cooperation with a truth recovery body. That scheme was ruled unlawful and never implemented. Northern Ireland secretary Hilary Benn said the changes are necessary to restore trust among victims' families and communities who strongly oppose immunity for those responsible for violence and murder. The order would also lift restrictions on bringing new civil claims, reinstating the right of families to seek justice through the courts. In response to concerns among veterans' groups that this could expose former members of the armed forces to repeated or unfair legal action, the Government intends to introduce safeguards for veterans, including limits on reinvestigation, health protections, anonymity provisions, and alternative ways of giving evidence.

Pray: for truth, justice, and healing, bringing reconciliation while protecting the innocent and honouring victims' families. (Psalm 85:10)
More: www.itv.com/news/utv/2026-01-21/mps-debate-removal-of-immunity-provision-from-legacy-act

Incoming Archbishop defends £100m slavery reparations fund

The incoming Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, has defended the CofE's £100 million slavery reparations fund amid growing political and internal opposition. Writing to MPs and peers calling for the plan to be scrapped, she said the Church must address its historic links to African chattel slavery with honesty, responsibility, and Christian integrity. The fund is intended to provide seed funding for community projects and enterprises serving those affected by the legacy of slavery. Critics, including several Conservative MPs, argue the money should instead support parish ministry, church buildings, and historic records, warning of legal and financial risks. Dame Sarah responded that the initiative does not reduce parish funding, noting that £1.6 billion has been committed to parishes over the next three years. However, polling suggests significant concern among churchgoers, with many saying parish ministry should take priority and warning they may redirect giving if the fund proceeds.

Pray: for humility, unity, and Christlike discernment as the Church seeks justice while faithfully sustaining local mission. (Micah 6:8)
More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/archbishop-mullally-defends-100m-slavery-reparations-fund-despite-opposition

Europe

Greenland: Trump drops tariffs threat after meeting Rutte

Tensions between the USA and Europe eased after Donald Trump reversed his threat to impose tariffs on European countries over Greenland and ruled out using force to seize the territory. Speaking in Davos, Trump said a new 'framework' had been agreed with NATO secretary-general Mark Rutte, focussing on Arctic security, minerals, and defence cooperation. While details remain vague, the move paused a looming trade dispute that had shaken transatlantic relations and raised fears about NATO's future. Denmark welcomed the de-escalation but reaffirmed that Greenland's sovereignty is non-negotiable. European leaders cautiously praised the shift, seeing it as a step away from confrontation. Analysts, however, do not believe that trust can be fully restored, warning that relations may stay fragile, with trade and security tensions ready to resurface.

Pray: that leaders will choose dialogue, restraint, and wisdom in handling global tensions. Pray for improved relationships between the USA and Europe. (James 1:5)
More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/1/21/trump-nixes-european-tariff-threats-over-greenland-after-nato-chief-talks

Spain: at least forty dead after high-speed train crash

Spain has entered a period of deep national grief following its deadliest rail disaster in more than a decade. A high-speed collision near Adamuz in southern Andalusia claimed at least 41 lives, with fears that the toll could still rise as recovery work continues. Two trains derailed on 18 January after one strayed into the path of another, and investigators are carefully examining the scene, focusing on a carriage believed to have derailed first. The transport minister said that experts were extremely surprised because it happened on a flat stretch of track which had been renovated in May. Mechanical failure is being considered; sabotage, human error, and excessive speed have been ruled out. Local residents were among the first to help the injured, facing scenes of profound trauma. As families wait anxiously for news and many remain in hospital, the country is observing days of mourning, united in sorrow and still searching for answers.

Pray: that God would comfort grieving families and strengthen rescuers and investigators. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
More: www.wdef.com/spain-train-crash-death-toll-rises-as-nation-mourns-its-worst-rail-disaster-in-more-than-a-decade/

Ukraine: Russian air strikes cause widespread energy loss

As Ukraine is enduring one of the harshest winters of the war, Russian strikes continue to target the country's energy infrastructure. In Kyiv alone, around four thousand buildings remain without heating and nearly 60% of the city has lost electricity following recent attacks. Across the country, communities face similar disruptions amid freezing temperatures. Volodymyr Zelensky has declared a state of emergency in the energy sector, with schools closed, public lighting reduced, and hundreds of thousands leaving the capital. He has also criticised the mayor of Kyiv, former boxer Vitali Klitschko, for not doing enough to restore power quickly. Hospitals have reported more than a thousand cases of frostbite and hypothermia in recent weeks. Emergency warming tents now dot the city, offering shelter and food. Germany has described Russian winter attacks on energy as war crimes, and the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for two top military officials said to be responsible for them.

Pray: that civilians would be protected, sustained, and given hope amid hardship. (Isaiah 41:10)
More: www.euronews.com/2026/01/21/over-half-of-kyiv-homes-still-lack-power-after-russian-air-strikes-zelenskyy-says

Worldwide

Israel: football pitch for Palestinian children wins a reprieve

A small Palestinian children's football pitch in Bethlehem has been granted a temporary reprieve after Israel postponed its planned demolition. The Aida Youth Centre pitch, built in 2020 to serve more than two hundred children from the nearby Aida refugee camp, was declared illegal for lacking permits and for its proximity to Israel's security barrier. A demolition order issued late last year sparked a widespread international campaign, including a petition signed by more than half a million people and appeals from figures within global football. The Israeli military, which still maintains that the pitch poses security concerns, says the postponement is 'for the time being'. For local families, the issue carries deep emotional weight, symbolising dignity, hope, and normal childhood amid overcrowding and restriction. While the immediate threat has eased, the community fears the order could return once attention fades, and has vowed to keep campaigning.

Pray: that these children would be protected, given space to grow, and hold onto hope. (Proverbs 22:6)
More: www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly3dm37m7no

Iran: minister threatens USA after protests crackdown

Iran's foreign minister has issued his most direct warning yet to the USA, threatening a full military response if Iran faces renewed attack, as the country remains under intense pressure following its deadly crackdown on protests. Writing in a US newspaper, he defended the government's actions and blamed armed unrest for the violence, despite video evidence suggesting security forces fired on unarmed demonstrators. His remarks come amid heightened regional tensions, with a US aircraft carrier group moving toward the Middle East and American military assets repositioned across the region. Iran has also been accused of launching missile and drone strikes against a Kurdish separatist group in northern Iraq, further escalating concerns. Human rights organisations report more than 4,500 people killed and over 26,000 arrested during the protests, with fears growing that some could face execution. Iran's Supreme Leader has acknowledged thousands of deaths while blaming the United States. Though protests have subsided amid internet shutdowns, the scale of casualties and rising military rhetoric have raised alarms about wider regional conflict and severe consequences for civilians.

Pray: for protection of civilians in Iran. Pray for a much-needed peaceful transition of power for this repressed nation. (Psalm 46:9)
More: abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/irans-top-diplomat-issues-direct-threat-us-crackdown-129409486

Pakistan: devastating fire in Karachi shopping centre

Grief and anger grip Karachi after a devastating fire tore through Gul Plaza, a crowded wholesale shopping centre, leaving at least 27 people dead and more than seventy missing. The blaze spread rapidly late on 17 January, trapping shoppers and workers inside a building packed with stalls and mostly locked exits. Survivors described panic, thick smoke, and desperate attempts to escape as flames engulfed the floors within minutes. Many families are still waiting for news of loved ones, gathering at the ruins in anguish and uncertainty. Rescue efforts have been slowed by the unstable, heavily damaged structure, with officials warning it could collapse at any time. As forensic teams work to identify victims, public frustration has grown over alleged delays in emergency response and long-standing safety failures. Protests have erupted, with calls for accountability, reforms in building regulations, and improved disaster preparedness to prevent further tragedies.

Pray: that God would comfort the grieving and bring justice. Pray that the authorities will be able to provide safer cities. (Psalm 147:3)
More: www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1ev4z4n5dzo

Guatemala: state of emergency after prison riots and ten police killed

A wave of coordinated gang violence which left ten police officers dead has prompted the government of Guatemala to declare a thirty-day state of emergency. The attacks began with riots at three prisons, where members of the Barrio 18 gang took guards hostage, and quickly spread to targeted killings of police in and around Guatemala City. Violence escalated after authorities regained control of a prison holding the gang's leader, Aldo 'El Lobo' Duppie. In response, emergency measures now allow expanded police powers, including arrests without warrants for suspected gang members and restrictions on movement and demonstrations. The nation has mourned fallen officers amid heightened security and widespread fear. The unrest highlights ongoing struggles with organised crime, prison control, and public safety, as gangs continue to exert influence both inside prisons and on the streets.

Pray: that God would bring justice, protect communities, and strengthen those enforcing the law. (Romans 13:4)
More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/1/20/guatemala-mourns-10-police-slain-by-gangsters-amid-state-of-emergency

South Africa / Mozambique / Zimbabwe: 100+ dead after severe flooding

A national disaster has been declared in South Africa after weeks of torrential rain and severe flooding killed at least thirty people in the country's north and caused widespread destruction. In Limpopo and Mpumalanga, the worst-hit provinces, homes, roads, and bridges have been washed away, leaving many families displaced. Heavy rains have also affected other provinces, while neighbouring Mozambique and Zimbabwe also suffered deadly floods, bringing the regional death toll to more than a hundred. In Limpopo alone, damage is estimated at around £180 million. Rescue teams are still searching for missing people, including a five-year-old child believed to have been swept away when his home flooded. Hundreds of tourists and staff were evacuated from Kruger National Park during the crisis, highlighting the scale of disruption. As recovery efforts continue, communities face deep loss and an uncertain road ahead.

Pray: that God would protect vulnerable communities and guide rescue and recovery efforts. (Psalm 46:1)
More: <https://www.africanews.com/2026/01/19/south-africa-declares-national-disaster-over-floods-and-rains-that-have-killed-30-people/>

Syria: US moves 150 IS prisoners, thousands to follow

US forces have begun transferring IS prisoners out of Syria, moving 150 detainees to Iraq under plans that could see up to 7,000 relocated. The move follows growing instability after Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) withdrew troops from parts of northeast Syria, raising concerns over the security of prisons and detention camps holding thousands of IS members and affiliates. US officials said recent unrest allowed around 200 low-level fighters to escape one facility, though many were later recaptured. More than 10,000 IS fighters remain imprisoned in Syria, alongside thousands of women and children connected to the group. The transfers are being carried out in coordination with the Iraqi government as part of efforts to prevent a resurgence of IS and maintain regional security. The changes come amid a wider political shift, with Syria's new government seeking to reassert control after the fall of Bashar al-Assad. A ceasefire has been agreed with the SDF, which has been urged to integrate into the Syrian state, marking a significant transition in security arrangements.

Pray: for lasting peace, protection from extremism, and stability as authorities manage dangerous transitions in fragile regions. (Isaiah 32:17)
More: news.sky.com/story/us-moves-150-islamic-state-prisoners-out-of-syria-with-thousands-more-to-follow-13497338

Pakistan: exports of rice rise significantly

Exports of rice from Pakistan rebounded strongly in December 2025, rising 14% month on month, driven largely by a surge of more than 50% in basmati shipments. Total exports reached 489,000 tonnes, allowing Pakistan to overtake Vietnam and become the world's third-largest rice exporter for the month, behind India and Thailand. The UAE and China were the top destinations, while exports also expanded across Africa, Europe, and North America. A significant development was Pakistan's growing presence in Central Asia, as exporters shifted to direct trade routes following Afghan border closures. Despite these gains, deep structural challenges remain, including intense global competition, policy inconsistencies, high logistics costs, and limited access to key markets such as Iraq and Türkiye. Encouraging signs include rising demand from Iran, Central Asia, and the USA, offering hope for sustained recovery if reforms follow.

Pray: giving thanks for farmers in Pakistan and elsewhere. Pray that they will continue to get good crops in spite of changing weather patterns. (2 Timothy 2:6)
More: asianews.network/basmati-boom-propels-pakistan-past-vietnam/

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Prayer Alert is produced in partnership with
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