

Monday 7th September

Hezbollah

“For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them.” 2 Cor: 5:19

Hezbollah - the Party of God - is a Shia Islamist political, military and social group that today is Lebanon’s most powerful organisation. It emerged with the help of Iran during the Israeli occupation of Lebanon in the early 1980s, though its ideological roots stretch back to the Shia Islamic revival in Lebanon in the 1960s and 1970s.

In 2011, the group and its allies forced the collapse of the unity government led by Saad Hariri, a Saudi-backed Sunni Muslim. They warned they would not stand by as four of its members were accused of involvement in the assassination of Mr Hariri's father Rafik, in 2005.

Hezbollah has been accused of carrying out a string of bombings and plots against Jewish and Israeli targets. They believe that Israel occupies Muslim lands. There has very recently been more tension on the border with Israel. The Israeli government said they had thwarted an attack by Hezbollah to infiltrate Israeli territory.

Hezbollah members have also fought in the Syrian war. They helped to save the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad from defeat, together with Russia and Iran. This gives them increasing influence in Syria. In Beirut, where it controls 3 ministries and, together with allies, 70 of the 128 parliamentary seats, it had a decisive hand in the government’s most important decisions. Hassan Nasrallah is the current overall leader.

- Pray that Nasrallah and all members of Hezbollah would be drawn to the Prince of Peace.
- Pray that they would lay down their agendas, bow their knees to Jesus, and devote themselves to His cause—the reconciliation of man to man, and of God and man.
- Pray that Hezbollah members would become known for sending out peacemakers throughout the Middle East.

Source of some content: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-10814698>

Tuesday 8th September

Lebanon

At the time of writing, the blast in Beirut had happened just one week ago and the Prime Minister, Hassan Diab, had just resigned following angry protests in Beirut for three consecutive nights. Most Lebanese blame their leadership's corruption and neglect for the explosion at the port in Beirut. Mr Diab took office in January with the support of the Iran-backed Hezbollah movement and its allies, following the resignation of the previous government after mass protests. President Michael Aoun had asked the current government to stay on in a caretaker capacity until a new cabinet is formed.

Protests had been ongoing since last October, with many angry and frustrated for alleged government corruption and for its handling of the country's worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war.

More than 50% of the Lebanese population lives under the poverty line. Hyperinflation has caused the Lebanese lira to lose 85% of its value in ten months. The unemployment rate is at 40%. Power cuts are daily and last up to 22 hours per day. The infrastructure is unsafe and the water is unclean. The economy is collapsing and the banking crisis has forbidden people to withdraw their own money from banks. There is no real access to a public healthcare system. Basic food items are becoming unaffordable to many. With the future of the port in Beirut in doubt, it will be difficult to get food supplies to the county at a time when there are already shortages. Lebanon imports most of its food. Large amounts of food stored at the port were destroyed causing fears of even more widespread shortages.

A new Prime Minister will have to be chosen. Under the present system, political office is divided by a power-sharing agreement to ensure that the three major religious blocks - Shia, Sunni and Christian - are represented. The National Pact of 1943 established this division, declaring that the president must be Christian, the prime minister Sunni Muslim and the speaker of parliament a Shia Muslim.

The unity government is split equally between the two main opposing factions in Lebanese politics - the Hezbollah-led pro-Syria 'March 8 coalition' and the Western-leaning 'March 14 movement' led by Sunni Muslims.

The fear amongst the Lebanese people is that the system of sectarian politics will not bring the changes that they so desperately want.

- Pray for President Michel Aoun and other leaders in this country as they try to find a way forward through the current crises.
- Lebanon is in desperate need of better leadership. Pray that the people of Lebanon will find freedom from the oppressive corruption that has shrouded the country for so long.
- Pray for international help to reach the most needy and vulnerable.
- Pray that this current situation will be used to bring good and people will overlook divisions and differences to help one another.

Source of some content: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-53656220>
<http://www.cryoutnow.org/>

Wednesday 9th September

Hamas

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people." Eph 1:18

Hezbollah is a role model to Hamas in terms of its military, political and media operations. Hamas is a Palestinian Sunni Islamist political organisation and militant group located in Gaza. It was founded in 1987 to liberate Palestine, including modern-day Israel, from Israeli occupation and to establish an Islamic state in the area that is now Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It governs Gaza independently of the Palestinian Authority.

Hamas' military wing known as the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, has conducted many anti-Israel attacks in both Israel and the Palestinian territories since the 1990s. This has been most notably through suicide bombings and rocket attacks. Hamas was alleged to have carried out three major military campaigns from Gaza against Israel in 2008, 2012 and 2014. It emerged from the 2008 and 2012 conflicts militarily reduced, but with renewed support among Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank for having confronted Israel and survived. Since 2014, violence has flared up from time to time, despite an informal Egyptian-brokered Hamas-Israel truce. The latest clash in early August was a result of Hamas allegedly firing a rocket into Southern Israel and Israel responding with fighter jets striking Hamas facilities in Gaza.

While many countries see Hamas as a terrorist organisation, its supporters see it as a legitimate resistance movement. Ismail Haniyeh is the current leader of this group.

- Pray for Jesus to be glorified among those who have committed themselves to Hamas.
- Pray for the Word of God to flood the Hamas group camps and for those who read and hear the words of God to have open eyes and ears to the truth of Jesus.
- Pray for followers of Jesus to be like Ananias (Acts 9: 10-19), brave in the face of potential harm knowing that Jesus has called them to difficult people and places.

Sources of some content: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13331522>
<https://www.vox.com/2018/11/20/18080058/israel-palestine-hamas>
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/israel-army-attacks-hamas-targets-gaza-200803060440420.html>

Thursday 10th September

Praising and praying God's word over members of Fundamentalist Muslim groups

Let's worship God, knowing that He can do more than we can ever ask or imagine and declaring His word over every Fundamentalist group.

You may like to listen to Flood the Earth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqXXP09F7cQ>

Let's stand in the gap and declare what God says:

- "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Matthew 5:43-44
- "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matthew 5:38-39

- “and forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.” Matthew 6:12
- “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:18
- “From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight.” Psalm 72:14
- “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28
- “Thus says the Lord God....Put away violence and oppression, and execute justice and righteousness.” Ezekiel 45:9a

Source: <https://prayercast.com/violence.html>

Friday 11th September

Called to reach the Taliban with the truth of the gospel

The Taliban

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jer 29:11

The Taliban is an extreme Islamic group, which ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. It formed when an unknown group of 50 young religious students led by Mullah Mohammed Omar, emerged from the Afghan refugee camps in northern Pakistan following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. They began to take over Afghanistan with a promise to restore peace and security and enforce their own austere version of Sharia, or Islamic law, once in power. By 1998, the Taliban were in control of almost 90% of Afghanistan.

The group was removed from power by a US-led invasion in 2001 but has gradually regained its strength and now controls and influences more territory than at any point since that time. The still-prominent Taliban and tribal warlords continue to be a fighting force in Afghanistan and neighbouring Pakistan. They are a major threat to Afghanistan’s government and continue to destabilise the nation. Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, a hard-line religious scholar has been the leader since 2016 after a US drone killed his predecessor.

They have carried out attacks across the country, including on military bases and schools. In May this year, an attack by the Taliban on a maternity ward in the capital, Kabul, left 24 people dead. Mothers, newborn babies and nurses were among the victims.

In 2018, the Taliban began peace talks with the US to try to find an end to long-running conflict in the country that has cost tens of thousands of lives. Taliban representatives, US diplomats and military personnel are now meeting in Doha on a regular basis to discuss the implementation of a peace deal between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban. The talks had collapsed in April after a disagreement between the US and the Taliban over a prisoner swap.

- Let's pray for the Lord to be victorious in the lives of Taliban members.
- Pray that God would bring members of the Taliban into the true calling that He has for their lives. Pray that He would reveal His good plans for them and cause them to seek Him with all their hearts.
- Pray that members of the Taliban would have a revelation of who Jesus is. Pray that God would remove all the misunderstandings and would allow them to know Him rightly so that they would be able to proclaim His truth.

Source of some content: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11451718>

Saturday 12th September

Called to reach the Taliban with the truth of the gospel

A lone man trudges the rugged mountain trail. He keeps his beard bushy and long. The hair on his head is close shaven. He travels into the Taliban region along the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Yet he is not a Taliban. He is a Muslim-background believer.

God has called him to evangelise the Taliban. He knows it can cost him his life. Still, he makes his regular rounds, carrying a few New Testaments and other materials. He follows the promptings of the Holy Spirit in deciding when to witness and when to give a New Testament. While he has suffered, he has not yet been killed.

This man seeks to penetrate the immense spiritual barrier to Christ formed by the Taliban.

- Pray for this brave evangelist who treks the Taliban region, that God will protect him and use him to lead Taliban members to faith in Christ.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will penetrate the hearts of Taliban members.
- Pray that members of the Taliban may comprehend the extravagance of God's love filling their hearts, no matter how undeserving they may feel.

Source of most content: <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/issue/day/pashtun-taliban-members/>