

## Monday 7th October

*“And Saul approved of his (Stephen’s) execution.” Acts 8:1*

Paul (formerly Saul), was a notorious persecutor of Christians. So much so that when Ananias was asked by the Lord to go to Saul, he answered, “Lord I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem” (Acts 9:13). Ananias was frightened of this extremist.

And yet the Lord met Saul where he was and changed him into the person who would write more of the New Testament than any other person; the passionate follower of Christ who planted churches and gave us a deep theology of redemption. This persecutor was turned into a martyr.

Today, extremist Muslim groups bring fear and suffering across the earth. They are called our enemies. And yet, Jesus loves them deeply – all who have committed horrible acts. And Jesus can redeem them.

What better way is there to fight terrorism than with the redeeming love of Christ? Terrorists are not beyond the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Read a Frontiers worker’s challenge to forgive her persecutors and love her enemies in Love Your Enemies: <https://frontiersusa.org/blog/love-your-enemies/>

- Let’s cry out to God on behalf of members of extremist Muslim groups, that Jesus would reveal himself to them.
- Pray for followers of Jesus to be like Ananias; brave in the face of potential harm knowing that Jesus has called them for this task.
- Pray for the Word of God to flood extremist groups and for those who read and hear the words of God to have open eyes and ears to the truth of Jesus.
- Pray for Jesus to be glorified among those who have committed themselves to extremist Muslim groups.

## Tuesday 8th October

### Hamas and Hezbollah in the Middle East

**Hamas** is a Palestinian Islamist political organisation and militant group. It seeks to replace Israel with a Palestinian state. It also governs Gaza independently of the Palestinian Authority. It has waged war on Israel since the group’s founding in 1987; most notably through suicide bombings and rocket attacks.

**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 '70s.



Hezbollah has been accused of carrying out a string of bombings and plots against Jewish and Israeli targets. 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 post-war Syria, in shaping what emerges from the ruins of war. In Beirut, where it controls 3 ministries and, together with allies, 70 of the 128 parliamentary seats, it has a decisive hand in the fragile government's most important decisions.

- Pray that members of Hamas and Hezbollah would be drawn to the Prince of Peace.
- Pray that they would lay down other 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 Hamas and Hezbollah members would become known for sending out peacemakers throughout the Middle East.

Sources: <https://www.vox.com/2018/11/20/18080058/israel-palestine-hamas>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/02/censured-by-britain-hezbollah-bigger-than-ever-in-beirut>

## Wednesday 9th October

### Al Shabaab and Boko Haram in Africa

**Al Shabaab** is an Islamist militant group in Somalia. Allied to al-Qaeda, it has been pushed out of most of the main towns it once controlled, but it remains a potent threat. It has carried out a string of attacks across the region, including suicide bombings. In late July, members of the group attacked the mayor's office in the capital of Mogadishu, resulting in his death. The mayor, Abdirahman Omar Osman, had been an outspoken opponent of the group.



Abdirahman Omar Osman

Al Shabaab was chased out of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, in 2011, but the city is still hit regularly by the militants. The group, which is fighting to overthrow the internationally backed government, sees anyone working with the government, the UN or NGOs as an enemy.

**Boko Haram** is a militant Islamist group based in Nigeria, that aligned itself with IS in 2015. Since its formation in 2002, it has caused havoc there through a wave of bombings, assassinations and abductions, including the kidnapping of female students from a college in Chibok in 2014. It is fighting to overthrow the government and create an Islamic state.

Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam which makes it 'haram', or forbidden, for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with Western society. Boko Haram regards the Nigerian state as being run by non-believers, regardless of whether the president is Muslim or not

and it has extended its military campaign by targeting neighbouring states such as Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The UN estimates that at least 20,000 people have been killed in the conflict to date, but that is widely held to be far below the true number.

- In a culture of honour and shame, pray that God would redirect the honour and valour of these men toward His purposes. Pray that they rise up as mighty men who stand for the Lord Jesus.
- Pray for the members of Al Shabaab and Boko Haram; that God would not leave a single one untouched by His love.
- Pray these fighters would find real strength, not in their abilities or power, but in the strength and power of Christ.  
*“The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name.”* Exodus 15:2-3

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15336689> and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/29/dozens-feared-killed-by-suspected-boko-haram-fighters-in-nigeria>

## Thursday 10th October

### Caught Between Spiritual Extremes

Read this encouraging and true story from a Frontiers worker:

Nasir wanted to learn about Jesus. Just one month earlier, he had been stopped at the airport as he tried to leave to join militant fighters in Syria. Unnerved by this experience, Nasir briefly declared himself an atheist. But he couldn’t deny God’s existence. Hungry for the truth, he started searching online for information about the true way to peace with God. He came across a Facebook page that seeks to introduce Muslims to the gospel. He exchanged several messages with the page’s administrators, who then connected him to Brian, a Frontiers worker.



In their first meeting, Nasir received the Bible Brian gave him and said he was excited to discover Jesus’ message of hope. But the next time Brian met with him, Nasir said: “I want nothing to do with this Jesus. I feel like I’m simply exchanging one form of extremism for another.”

When Brian told this to his teammates, one woman said. “I’m going to fast and get others to join me and we’re going to pray for Nasir to become a follower of Jesus.” For three weeks, Brian and his teammates prayed and fasted for Nasir.

No sooner had the three weeks ended than Nasir called Brian. Brian invited Hamid, a local Muslim-background believer, to come and meet with him and Nasir. He hoped that meeting Hamid would show Nasir that people from his own culture can and do become followers of Christ.

During their meeting, Nasir listened as Hamid shared the gospel. Brian had already shared this message with Nasir, almost word for word, but as Hamid spoke, it touched Nasir's heart deeply. "God just took hold of him as my teammates rallied in prayer and fasting for him," Brian said. "For Nasir, sitting down and hearing the gospel from one of his fellow countrymen was a big turning point." Now Nasir is studying the Word with Brian and Hamid and growing in love for Jesus.

- Pray that Nasir and others like him will reach out to those in their countries who are thinking of joining militant organisations and give them the message of hope.
- We praise and thank God for turning Nasir's heart to Christ and for the many people involved, from Facebook page administrators to committed believers, fasting and praying. Let's ask God to raise up more powerful intercessors to pray for those who are thinking of joining extremist groups.
- Ask the Lord to send labourers to places caught up in militant activity where there are still no workers, no believers and no churches.

## **Friday 11th October**

### **The PKK**

*"Jesus said, 'You have heard it said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:44-45a*

The PKK, The Kurdistan Workers' Party, based in Turkey was formed in 1978 and launched an armed struggle against the Turkish government in 1984, calling for an independent Kurdish state within Turkey. Fighting flared up again after a two year-old ceasefire ended in July 2015.

Following a failed coup attempt in July 2016 against President Erdogan by mutinous Turkish officers, the PKK was and continues to be targeted by the Turkish government. They want to rid Turkey of Kurds living in the southeast of the country and quash the PKK, who have been a thorn in their side for many years.

Listen to the worship song and pray for the PKK and for Turkey:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQoBz91mLn4>

As we praise God and sing "I can feel Your mighty power, it's moving in this place," let's declare this to be a reality for Turkey and all who live there.

- Pray for members of the PKK to acknowledge that Jesus is worthy and he is holy.
- Pray that the Kurds would continue to seek out political solutions for their grievances and that regional and national political authorities would work well with them.
- Pray for military, religious and political leaders on all sides to find hope in Jesus, the Messiah.

**Saturday 12th October**

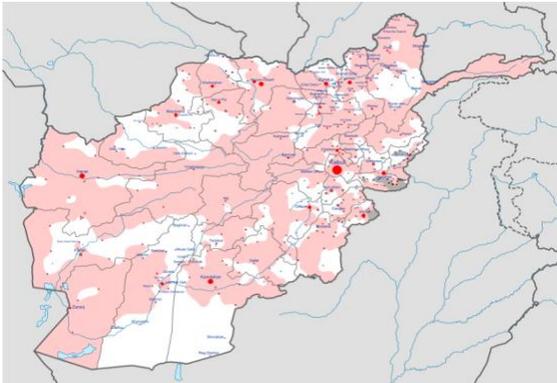
## **IS and the Taliban**

**IS** (formerly ISIS) was based in Iraq and Syria but was defeated in Iraq 18 months ago and lost control in Syria earlier this year. This group once controlled 34,000 square miles of territory. Although IS has suffered substantial losses, it is believed to still control between 14,000 and 18,000 militants in Iraq and Syria, including up to 3,000 foreigners.

In Iraq, the jihadist group has already "substantially evolved into a covert network", UN Secretary General António Guterres said in a report to the Security Council released in February this year. IS militants are active in rural areas in Iraq with remote, rugged terrain that gives them freedom to move and plan attacks, including kidnappings for ransom, targeted assassinations of local leaders and attacks against state utilities and services.

The IS network in Syria is expected to evolve to resemble that in Iraq.

**The Taliban** is an extreme Islamic group, which ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. It formed



Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan (2015- present)

when an unknown group of young religious students led by Mullah Mohammed Omar, emerged from the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan and began to take over the country.

Despite losing power, the Taliban movement continues to be a fighting force in Afghanistan and neighbouring Pakistan and a major threat to Afghanistan's government. They continue to carry out attacks across the country, including on military bases and schools.

Earlier this year, the Taliban began peace talks with the US to try to find an end to the 17-year conflict. It is hoped that these talks are nearing a conclusion and that this will lead to peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan government.

- Let's pray for the Lord to be victorious in the lives of IS and Taliban members.
- IS and the Taliban rely on their own strength and resources. Let's ask God to bring them to the end of their own strength and for them to become disillusioned with this way of living.
- The groups we have prayed for this week do not include every terrorist group. Let's pray for God's mercy on each and every one across the Muslim world, that they would put down their arms and find a better way.  
*"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."* Jer 29:13

If you want to pray further for IS and include other terrorist organisations, there is further prayer material at: <http://prayforisis.com/>