



## Global Watch Daily – December 18, 2025

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A concise summary of significant developments in Israel and the world through a grounded Christian worldview.

### **Israel & Jerusalem**

The youngest and oldest victims of the recent Hanukkah attack in Sydney were honored in tearful funerals, marking a somber moment for the Jewish community worldwide ([Times of Israel](#)). A re-release of the documentary “Christmastime for the Jews” has drawn renewed attention to Jewish experiences during the holiday season, fostering greater understanding and dialogue ([Times of Israel](#)).

Reflecting on the tragic Bondi Beach massacre, discussions have emerged about the meaning of peoplehood and communal identity in the face of violence ([Times of Israel](#)). In response to rising antisemitic violence, Christian leaders across the nation have launched a national declaration condemning antisemitism and calling for unity and protection of Jewish communities ([Israel365 News](#)).

James Evans shares how observing Shabbat transformed both his business practices and personal life, highlighting the enduring spiritual and cultural significance of this sacred day ([Israel365 News](#)).

Archaeologists uncovered a rare 1,300-year-old lead pendant decorated with a menorah symbol near the Temple Mount, shedding light on Jewish heritage during the early medieval period ([Israel365 News](#)).

Israeli President Herzog and Pope Leo XIV held discussions addressing the rise of antisemitism in the wake of the Bondi massacre, emphasizing the need for interfaith solidarity ([JNS](#)). Authorities detained seven men near Bondi Beach following a tip-off, as investigations continue into the circumstances surrounding the recent attack ([JNS](#)).

The Israeli Air Force neutralized a terrorist who crossed the Gaza truce line, underscoring ongoing security challenges in the region ([JNS](#)). Despite ongoing discussions, the Gaza truce coordination centre has seen little concrete progress, with many expressing frustration over the lack of actionable outcomes ([Al-Monitor](#)). The United Nations has issued a warning about worsening conditions for displaced Gazans due to heavy rains,



highlighting the ongoing humanitarian crisis ([BBC](#)). Saudi, French, and U.S. officials are actively promoting a plan for the disarmament of Hezbollah, aiming to reduce tensions and enhance regional stability ([Al-Monitor](#)). Israeli military operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon continued throughout the week of December 8–14, 2025, focusing on disrupting militant activities and securing the northern border ([Long War Journal](#)).

Speculation grows over whether Iran's authorities are easing enforcement of the mandatory hijab, signaling potential shifts in social policy ([Al-Monitor](#)). An Iranian Nobel laureate was reportedly taken to the hospital following a violent arrest, raising international human rights concerns ([BBC](#)). The Israel Defense Forces have issued an evacuation order for Tehran ahead of planned strikes, signaling heightened military readiness ([Jerusalem Post](#)).

The Israeli Defense Ministry announced an exercise scheduled for Highway 35 on Sunday afternoon, aimed at enhancing operational preparedness ([Jerusalem Post](#)).

A Ukrainian drone attack on Moscow forced the closure of an airport, marking a significant escalation in the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine ([Jerusalem Post](#)).

## **Wars & Security (Israel and Region)**

Hamas publicly acknowledged the killing of senior commander Raed Saad, a significant blow to the group's leadership structure ([Long War Journal](#)).

Syria is investigating a deadly attack on U.S. forces, which resulted in the deaths of two National Guard soldiers, underscoring the volatile security environment in the region ([Long War Journal](#)). Former U.S. President Donald Trump has expanded the U.S. travel ban to include Syria and holders of Palestinian passports, reflecting ongoing security concerns ([BBC](#)).

Turkey continues to support Venezuela through various means, influencing geopolitical dynamics in Latin America ([Foundation for Defense of Democracies](#)).

Yemen separatist forces have seized a key oil region and are urging the United States to partner with them against the Iran-backed Houthi movement, intensifying the conflict in the Arabian Peninsula ([Foundation for Defense of Democracies](#)).

Russian President Vladimir Putin has threatened to continue armed force against Ukraine if his demands are not met through negotiations, signaling potential escalation in the



ongoing war ([Foundation for Defense of Democracies](#)).

## **Apostasy & Religious Developments**

An article reflecting on the transition from singleness explores the gains and losses experienced, offering spiritual insights into life changes and God's providence ([Religion News Service](#)).

Bishop Hicks, a close ally of Pope Leo XIV in Chicago, has been appointed to lead the New York diocese following the Dolan era, signaling continuity and potential new directions in church leadership ([Religion News Service](#)).

Rana Abdelhamid, a Muslim activist, is eyeing the vacant Assembly seat in Albany left by Mamdani, highlighting the increasing religious diversity in political representation ([Religion News Service](#)).

The Gospel Coalition podcast episode "Siblings, Young and Old" discusses family dynamics and faith across generations, encouraging listeners to embrace God's design for relationships ([The Gospel Coalition](#)). A recent review titled "Creation Is Talking. We've Forgotten How to Listen." calls Christians to renew their attentiveness to God's voice through His creation ([The Gospel Coalition](#)).

An article examines the historical pattern of Anglican reformers being labeled schismatic, emphasizing the ongoing challenges of church unity and reform ([The Gospel Coalition](#)).

A devotional piece encourages believers to cultivate a sense of Christmas wonder, deepening their appreciation of the incarnation and God's grace ([Crosswalk](#)). As Christmas approaches, Christians in Nigeria face a tense and dangerous environment, with persecution intensifying in various regions ([Open Doors USA](#)).

Fifteen years after a terror attack in which she was nearly killed, a survivor reflects on loss, survival, resilience, and the persistence of contemporary antisemitism ([Crosswalk](#)).

The film "David" is highlighted for recapturing the power and message of "The Prince of Egypt," inspiring renewed interest in biblical storytelling through media ([Crosswalk](#)).

A report stresses the importance of maintaining a stable Christian community in Lebanon as vital for the broader Middle East's religious and social fabric ([Open Doors USA](#)).



Clergy in Nigeria have called out escalating violence against Christians following recent abductions, urging international attention and intervention ([Open Doors USA](#)).

## **Biotechnology & Genetic Engineering**

Researchers have identified a hidden T cell switch that could significantly expand the effectiveness of cancer immunotherapy, offering hope for more patients ([ScienceDaily](#)). A concerning trend has emerged with young adults increasingly using cannabis as a sleep aid, raising questions about health and societal impacts ([ScienceDaily](#)).

Artificial intelligence is making strides in cancer detection but also raises privacy concerns as it can identify individuals beyond medical data ([ScienceDaily](#)).

Scientists have successfully introgressed leaf rust resistance from a wild species, *Aegilops kotschyi*, into hexaploid wheat, promising improved crop resilience ([Nature](#)).

Dysregulation driven by NSUNs proteins is being explored as a new frontier in targeted cancer therapy, potentially leading to novel treatments ([Nature](#)). Pharmaceutical developments continue with news on Lilly's obesity pill and various pharma deals involving major companies and political figures ([STAT News](#)). Advanced ensemble deep learning techniques are improving embryo evaluation in in-vitro fertilization procedures, enhancing success rates ([Nature](#)). UnitedHealthcare has delayed a controversial policy change related to remote patient monitoring, reflecting ongoing debates in health technology ([STAT News](#)).

Los Angeles is addressing mixed wild and urban fuel risks through controlled fires, aiming to reduce emergency room visits related to smoke exposure ([STAT News](#)).

## **Pestilence & Global Health**

A novel approach to preventing gum disease has been developed that preserves beneficial bacteria while targeting harmful pathogens, marking a breakthrough in oral health ([ScienceDaily](#)). Researchers have identified viral agents that may contribute to long COVID symptoms, advancing understanding of this complex condition ([ScienceDaily](#)). Studies show that children's anxiety and depression levels dropped rapidly following the reopening of schools after COVID-19 closures, highlighting the importance of in-person education ([ScienceDaily](#)).



The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) released an overview of avian influenza cases from September to November 2025, noting ongoing risks to both animal and human health ([ECDC](#)). The ECDC also published a communicable disease threats report covering the week of November 29 to December 5, 2025, providing surveillance data to inform public health responses ([ECDC](#)). Strategies to combat avian and swine flu in humans have been defined by the ECDC, emphasizing preparedness and coordinated action ([ECDC](#)).

## **Natural Disasters & Signs in the Heavens**

The Reventador Volcano has issued a volcanic ash advisory, signaling potential hazards to aviation and nearby populations ([Volcano Discovery](#)). Santiaguito Volcano has also issued a volcanic ash advisory with emissions reaching up to 14,000 feet, requiring monitoring for aviation safety ([Volcano Discovery](#)).

The World Earthquake Report for December 18, 2025, details global seismic activity, including minor tremors in California ([Volcano Discovery](#)). Recent earthquakes in California include a magnitude 1.6 event near Greenhorn and smaller tremors near The Geysers area, reflecting ongoing tectonic activity ([USGS](#)), ([USGS](#)), ([USGS](#)).

NASA's Hi ya! Hiha's mission continues to provide valuable data on solar activity and its effects on Earth's space environment ([NASA](#)). The Perseverance Mars Rover is prepared to traverse miles of Martian terrain in the years ahead, advancing planetary exploration and scientific discovery ([NASA](#)). A recent Hubble Space Telescope image highlights the impact of massive stars, providing insights into stellar evolution and cosmic phenomena ([NASA](#)).

## **Global Macro & Geopolitics**

The European Central Bank has kept interest rates unchanged amid improving economic prospects across the Eurozone ([Politico](#)). Conversely, the Bank of England has cut rates again as the UK economy shows signs of faltering, reflecting divergent monetary policies within Europe ([Politico](#)).

Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever warned that failure to fund Ukraine would be a disgrace for the EU, though he opposed using Russian assets for this purpose ([Politico](#)).

A trial in Syria is underway addressing post-Assad era violence, highlighting ongoing efforts for justice and reconciliation ([France24](#)). The U.S. Congress has ended sanctions dating back to the Assad era in Syria, opening the door for potential investment and



diplomatic engagement ([France24](#)). A report titled “Iran: A ‘blood rain’ in the Persian Gulf” highlights ongoing tensions and incidents in the strategically vital waterway ([France24](#)).

The United Kingdom will rejoin the European Union’s Erasmus exchange program, signaling renewed educational and cultural cooperation ([France24](#)). The European Union has commenced a crucial summit focused on plans to utilize Russian assets to support Ukraine’s recovery ([France24](#)). The EU-Mercosur trade deal faces uncertainty amid concerns from farmers, reflecting the complexities of international trade negotiations ([France24](#)).

A French doctor, dubbed “Doctor Death” for poisoning patients, has been sentenced to life imprisonment, underscoring justice served in a high-profile case ([BBC](#)).

Thailand has conducted bombings near Cambodia’s Poipet border crossing, escalating regional security concerns ([BBC](#)). Rebel forces have begun withdrawing from a key city in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a development welcomed by local leaders ([BBC](#)).

Thailand and Cambodia have agreed to deploy ASEAN observers ahead of a special meeting, aiming to ease tensions along their border ([The Diplomat](#)). India acknowledges it does not know how many foreigners with expired visas remain in the country, raising concerns about immigration management ([The Diplomat](#)).

The year 2025 has seen significant progress in the abolition of capital punishment worldwide, marking a hopeful trend for human rights ([The Diplomat](#)).

## **Middle Eastern Artifacts**

A rare, 1,300-year-old lead pendant decorated with a menorah symbol was uncovered north of the City of David, providing valuable insight into Jewish symbolism during the early medieval period ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)). Archaeologists uncovered the largest dam in ancient Israel within the City of David area, highlighting advanced water management techniques of the time ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)).

An Assyrian inscription dating from the First Temple period was discovered, offering new evidence of ancient Near Eastern interactions and biblical history ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)).

A rare gold coin of Egyptian Queen Berenice II was discovered in the City of David, illustrating the region’s historical connections with the Hellenistic world ([City of David -](#)



[News in Antiquities](#)).

## **Reflection**

The unfolding events in Israel and the broader Middle East remind us of the persistent challenges faced by God's chosen people and the fragile peace in this pivotal region. As believers, we are called to pray for protection, wisdom, and reconciliation among nations, recognizing that true peace comes from the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. The rise in antisemitism and violence calls the Church to stand firmly against hatred and to be a voice of hope and love.

In the midst of global turmoil, scientific advancements in medicine and technology offer hope for healing and restoration, yet they also present ethical questions that require discernment grounded in biblical truth. As we witness natural disasters and signs in the heavens, we are reminded of the sovereignty of God over all creation and the urgency of sharing the gospel message. May we remain vigilant, compassionate, and faithful servants in these times.

- Pray for peace and protection over Israel and its neighbors, that God's will would be done in the region.
- Ask God for wisdom and courage for Christian leaders to combat antisemitism and promote unity.
- Seek God's guidance in the ethical use of scientific advancements for the good of humanity and His glory.