



Global Watch Daily – February 17, 2026

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

Israel & Jerusalem

Rev. Jesse Jackson, a prominent US civil rights leader and protégé of Martin Luther King, Jr., has passed away at the age of 81. He is remembered for his decades-long advocacy for Black causes and his complex relationship with the Jewish community, including a public apology for controversial remarks about New York City ([Times of Israel](#)). Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu hosted a delegation of US lawmakers visiting Jerusalem with the U.S. Israel Education Association, underscoring ongoing diplomatic ties ([JNS](#)).

The Israeli Defense Forces issued an evacuation order for Tehran ahead of planned strikes, signaling heightened regional tensions ([Jerusalem Post](#)). Concurrently, new nuclear talks between the US and Iran commenced in Geneva, with both sides expressing cautious optimism about reaching a deal ([BBC News](#)).

On the international sports front, a Swiss commentator criticized the Israeli bobsleigh team at the Winter Olympics, accusing them of supporting the Gaza conflict, which sparked controversy ([Al Jazeera](#)). Domestically, a court extended restrictions on the Prime Minister's chief of staff, Braverman, citing strengthened suspicions and legal errors in prior rulings, complicating the political landscape ([Times of Israel](#)).

Wars & Security (Israel and Region)

Hamas has renewed threats against rival Palestinian militias in Gaza, warning that their days are numbered and emphasizing that the Israeli military cannot protect them. This follows recent successful operations by these militias against Hamas ([Long War Journal](#)). In parallel, the US Treasury sanctioned Jood SARL, a Lebanese gold exchange identified as a front for Hezbollah's financial network, aiming to disrupt the terror group's gold reserves and shadow banking operations ([Long War Journal](#)).

Chatham House hosted events on Japan's engagement with countries in the Global South amid shifting international power dynamics, highlighting the contest for influence among China, the US, and Japan and its diplomatic efforts ([Chatham House](#)). Additionally,



Professor Marc Weller was appointed Director of Chatham House's Global Governance and Security Centre, bringing expertise in international law and security, with commentary on issues including Gaza and Ukraine ([Chatham House](#)).

Israeli military operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon continued with reduced intensity during early February, focusing on southern Lebanon and reflecting ongoing security concerns in the region ([Long War Journal](#)).

Global Macro & Geopolitics

In global news, the family of missing woman Nancy Guthrie has been cleared as suspects, with local police emphasizing their victim status and condemning contrary suggestions as cruel ([BBC News](#)). Meanwhile, the third round of Russia-Ukraine peace talks commenced amid ongoing strikes, though expectations for a breakthrough remain low ([BBC News](#)).

French President Emmanuel Macron addressed an AI summit in India, highlighting technological advancements and international cooperation in artificial intelligence ([France24](#)). Additionally, China's Spring Festival gala featured humanoid robots performing Kung Fu and other routines, showcasing the country's rapid progress in robotics technology ([France24](#)).

Thailand's monarchy faces challenges in the social media era, losing its traditional royal aura and facing calls for reform to preserve its relevance ([The Diplomat](#)). Vietnam has approved Starlink satellite internet service, allowing expanded access to satellite broadband for up to 600,000 users, marking a significant development in regional connectivity ([The Diplomat](#)).

Pestilence & Global Health

A large study tracking over 400 toddlers found no link between mRNA COVID-19 vaccination during or just before pregnancy and autism or developmental delays, providing strong reassurance about vaccine safety ([ScienceDaily](#)). Researchers at the Salk Institute revealed how life experiences and genetics combine to epigenetically shape immune responses, explaining varied reactions to viruses ([ScienceDaily](#)).

New simulations show that both H1N1 and COVID-19 spread rapidly across U.S. cities within weeks, driven by major travel hubs and air travel, underscoring the need for early detection systems to slow future pandemics ([ScienceDaily](#)). Australian scientists discovered a sugar unique to bacterial cells that can be targeted by antibodies to defeat



deadly drug-resistant superbugs, offering a promising new treatment approach ([ScienceDaily](#)).

A new nasal vaccine demonstrated strong protection against H5N1 bird flu in animal tests, potentially preventing infection at the earliest stage by targeting the nose and lungs ([ScienceDaily](#)). Meanwhile, researchers in Bangladesh identified a bat-borne virus infecting humans, raising concerns about the undetected circulation of dangerous viruses alongside Nipah ([ScienceDaily](#)).

Natural Disasters & Signs in the Heavens

A magnitude 1.6 earthquake struck 52 km northwest of Toyah, Texas, at a shallow depth, as reported by the USGS ([USGS](#)). NASA's SpaceX Crew-12 mission successfully launched astronauts to the International Space Station, marking a significant milestone in space exploration ([NASA](#)).

The US National Weather Service issued warnings for extremely critical fire weather across the Central Plains and an active weather pattern across the West, highlighting ongoing environmental risks ([weather.gov](#)). NASA's Carbothermal Reduction Demonstration project advanced solar chemistry techniques to extract oxygen from lunar soil, a key step toward sustainable human exploration on the Moon ([NASA](#)).

The Stonebreen glacier in Svalbard exhibits seasonal pulses in flow speed toward the sea, reflecting dynamic glacial processes observed by NASA Earth Observatory ([NASA](#)).

Middle Eastern Artifacts

Excavations in Bethlehem of Galilee uncovered a mosaic floor during road construction, with work directed by A. Ovadya and A. Goren in 1965, shedding light on the region's historical layers ([Israel Antiquities Authority](#)). In Ashqelon's Afridar neighborhood, a salvage excavation on Ha-Shiryonaim Street was conducted under Y. Huster's direction in 1998, contributing to the understanding of urban development ([Israel Antiquities Authority](#)).

Reflection

We should interpret these developments soberly, resisting both panic and apathy while attending to what is true. Our aim is prayerful discernment—grounding convictions in Scripture and keeping watch with steadiness and hope.