



Global Watch Daily – December 16, 2025

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

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Israel & Jerusalem

On Hanukkah, a tragic terror attack occurred at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia, where a gunman opened fire, killing at least 16 people. Among the victims was a Jewish couple who bravely struggled with the terrorist before the killing spree began, ultimately losing their lives in the process ([Times of Israel](#)), ([Times of Israel](#)). This attack has prompted pro-Israel groups to call for decisive action against terrorism, emphasizing the need for stronger security measures to protect Jewish communities worldwide ([Israel365 News](#)).

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has drawn historical parallels between Israel's current struggles and the ancient battle fought by the Maccabees, underscoring the nation's resolve amid ongoing threats ([JNS](#)). Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have intensified operations along the Gaza border, discovering weapons and surveillance equipment during raids near Rafah, signaling heightened vigilance against militant activities ([JNS](#)).

In a notable development in cyber defense, Israeli and U.S. forces recently completed a joint cyber training exercise, enhancing cooperation in countering digital threats that increasingly impact national security ([JNS](#)). On the cultural front, the Eurovision Song Contest's host announced that boos directed at Israel's performance will not be drowned out, reflecting the ongoing tensions surrounding Israel's international representation ([Al-Monitor](#)).

Globally, the aftermath of the Bondi attack has raised questions about radicalization, with Indian police stating that the gunman's family was unaware of his extremist views ([Al-Monitor](#)). Additionally, an Iranian Nobel laureate and human rights advocate was reportedly taken to the hospital following a violent arrest, highlighting ongoing repression in Iran ([BBC](#)). In Syria, three Americans were killed by an Islamic State gunman, underscoring the persistent instability in the region ([BBC](#)).



The Israeli military has also issued an evacuation order for Tehran ahead of planned strikes, signaling escalating tensions with Iran ([Jerusalem Post](#)). Meanwhile, a Ukrainian drone attack forced the closure of Moscow's main airport, reflecting the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia ([Jerusalem Post](#)).

Wars & Security (Israel and Region)

Hamas has officially acknowledged the death of its senior commander Raed Saad, a significant blow to the group's leadership amid ongoing hostilities with Israel ([Long War Journal](#)). In Syria, authorities are investigating a deadly attack on U.S. forces that resulted in the deaths of two National Guard soldiers, highlighting the persistent dangers faced by American troops in the region ([Long War Journal](#)).

The Hanukkah lighting ceremony in Australia was targeted by terrorists, resulting in multiple fatalities and raising concerns about the spread of antisemitic violence beyond the Middle East ([Long War Journal](#)). Analysts have linked this attack to broader geopolitical tensions involving Israel and Iran, emphasizing the complex web of regional hostilities ([Foundation for Defense of Democracies](#)).

In response to escalating threats, the United States has offered Ukraine Article 5-style security guarantees as President Zelenskyy meets with allies, signaling increased Western commitment to Ukraine's defense against Russian aggression ([Foundation for Defense of Democracies](#)).

Apostasy & Religious Developments

A recent Pew Research report sheds light on why some individuals remain in their faith communities while others leave, offering insights into religious retention and apostasy in contemporary society ([Religion News Service](#)). In the Vatican, Pope Leo's first Christmas crèche installation carries a powerful message of peace amid global unrest, inviting reflection on the true meaning of the season ([Religion News Service](#)).

In American politics, white Christian clergy are increasingly running for Congress as Democrats face skepticism from religious voters within their own party, highlighting the intersection of faith and political identity ([Religion News Service](#)). The Gospel Coalition has compiled its top theology stories of 2025, reflecting ongoing theological conversations shaping the church today ([The Gospel Coalition](#)).



An article exploring Christian influence in literature highlights how a Christian worldview animates Jane Austen's works, revealing the subtle integration of faith in classic fiction ([The Gospel Coalition](#)). Additionally, a Crosswalk commentary recounts how a culture of slavery was transformed, emphasizing the role of Christian faith in social change ([Crosswalk](#)).

In sports, Heisman Trophy winner Fernando Mendoza credits his faith in God as a driving force behind his rise to prominence, illustrating the impact of personal belief on achievement ([Crosswalk](#)). The ongoing threat of antisemitism is underscored by the death of a Holocaust survivor among the victims of the Australian Hanukkah attack ([Crosswalk](#)).

On the global persecution front, conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo has escalated sharply despite peace efforts, while the European Union discusses rising Christian persecution in South Asia. Meanwhile, the Vietnamese government remains silent on the case of an extradited Christian refugee, highlighting ongoing challenges for believers in hostile environments ([International Christian Concern](#)), ([International Christian Concern](#)), ([International Christian Concern](#)).

Biotechnology & Genetic Engineering

Scientists have made significant progress in uncovering the missing links between genes and disease, advancing our understanding of genetic influences on health ([Science Daily](#)). Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies can now decode disease genetic markers, opening new avenues for personalized medicine ([Science Daily](#)). Furthermore, AI has discovered methods to prevent viruses from entering cells, a breakthrough that could revolutionize antiviral treatments ([Science Daily](#)).

Innovations in telecommunications include the development of bio-hybrid 6G networks that use synthetic biology-enabled base stations, aiming to achieve energy-autonomous systems (Nature). Research into camphor derivatives has revealed promising anticancer and antioxidant properties, potentially leading to new therapeutic options (Nature). Additionally, alternatives to animal-derived components in cultivated meat research are being explored to address ethical and sustainability concerns ([Nature](#)).

In the biotech business sector, Ambros Therapeutics, a startup launched by Vivek Ramaswamy, has announced plans to develop treatments for complex regional pain syndrome, signaling new hope for patients with chronic pain ([STAT News](#)). Meanwhile, internal research at Humana is being scrutinized for its impact on Medicare Advantage



benefits, reflecting ongoing challenges in healthcare management ([STAT News](#)). Social media's influence on manic episodes in bipolar disorder patients is also under study, highlighting the intersection of mental health and digital technology ([STAT News](#)).

Pestilence & Global Health

Researchers have identified viral candidates that may contribute to the persistence of long COVID symptoms, offering new targets for treatment strategies ([Science Daily](#)). Following the reopening of schools after the COVID-19 pandemic, a rapid decline in anxiety and depression among children has been observed, underscoring the importance of in-person education for mental health ([Science Daily](#)).

In vaccine development, AI has uncovered a surprising vulnerability in the monkeypox virus that could lead to improved vaccine formulations ([Science Daily](#)). The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has released an overview of avian influenza cases from September to November 2025, highlighting ongoing surveillance efforts ([ECDC](#)). Additionally, the ECDC has outlined strategies to combat avian and swine flu transmission to humans, emphasizing preparedness for potential pandemics ([ECDC](#)).

Natural Disasters & Signs in the Heavens

Seismic activity has been reported globally on December 16, 2025, including minor earthquakes in New Mexico, California, and Texas, though no significant damage has been reported ([Volcano Discovery](#)), ([USGS](#)), ([USGS](#)), ([USGS](#)). Volcanic activity continues at several sites including Fuego, Semeru, Ibu, Dukono, Reventador, Sangay, Puracé, and Sabancaya, with ash advisories issued for Dukono volcano in Indonesia ([Volcano Discovery](#)), ([Volcano Discovery](#)).

Climatic patterns indicate a subtle return of La Niña conditions, which may influence global weather patterns in the coming months ([NASA](#)). NASA continues advancing its Moon-to-Mars exploration architecture studies, aiming to expand human presence beyond Earth ([NASA](#)). Satellite imagery highlights environmental features such as the Bassac River in southern Vietnam, contributing to ongoing Earth observation efforts ([NASA](#)).

Global Macro & Geopolitics

European leaders are engaged in complex negotiations regarding Russian assets, with the Estonian Prime Minister asserting that the European Union can disprove former U.S.



President Donald Trump's claims by agreeing on a plan for these assets ([Politico](#)). The European Parliament voted to strengthen safeguards on the Mercosur trade agreement ahead of critical talks with member states, reflecting concerns over environmental and labor standards ([Politico](#)).

The British government has publicly supported the BBC amid a \$10 billion lawsuit filed by Donald Trump over alleged edits to his January 6 speech that the former president claims were misleading, highlighting tensions between media and political figures ([Politico](#)). In the Middle East, an imprisoned Iranian Nobel laureate has been hospitalized twice following reported violent treatment, drawing international condemnation ([France24](#)).

Educational needs in Gaza remain critical, with calls for increased support for students amid ongoing conflict ([France24](#)). The Syrian government has acknowledged that the individual responsible for killing Americans was part of its security forces, raising questions about internal complicity ([France24](#)).

In Europe, German youth strongly oppose the reinstatement of mandatory military service, reflecting generational attitudes toward conscription ([France 24](#)). France is pushing for robust security guarantees for Ukraine before engaging in territorial negotiations with Russia ([France24](#)). Meanwhile, the EU is considering scrapping its 2035 ban on new petrol and diesel cars to support the automotive industry ([France24](#)).

Ukraine continues to struggle to maintain its electricity supply amid ongoing Russian attacks, highlighting the severe humanitarian impact of the conflict ([BBC](#)). The identities of the Bondi shooting victims have been reported, bringing personal stories to the forefront of this tragedy ([BBC](#)). The U.S. military announced the killing of eight individuals in recent strikes on alleged drug boats, part of ongoing efforts to combat narcotics trafficking ([BBC](#)).

In Southeast Asia, Indonesia reversed its decision to retire the Cirebon-1 power plant early, citing energy needs, while Malaysia postponed a special ASEAN meeting addressing the Thailand-Cambodia conflict. Thailand has scheduled a snap general election for February 8, 2026, indicating political shifts in the region ([The Diplomat](#)), ([The Diplomat](#)), ([The Diplomat](#)).

Middle Eastern Artifacts

Archaeological discoveries in the City of David continue to shed light on Jerusalem's rich history. A rare 1,300-year-old lead pendant featuring a menorah symbol was uncovered north of the site, offering insight into Jewish heritage during that period ([City of David -](#)



[News in Antiquities](#)). Additionally, an Assyrian inscription dating back to the First Temple period was discovered, providing valuable evidence of ancient Near Eastern interactions ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)).

The largest dam from ancient Israel has been excavated in the City of David, highlighting the advanced engineering capabilities of the region's early inhabitants ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)). A rare gold coin bearing the image of Egyptian Queen Berenice II was also found, underscoring the historical connections between Jerusalem and neighboring civilizations ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)).

Reflection

The events unfolding in Israel, the Middle East, and around the world remind us of the ongoing spiritual battle that underlies earthly conflicts. The courage displayed by those who confront terror, such as the Jewish couple in Sydney, echoes the steadfast faith of the Maccabees, who trusted in God's deliverance amid persecution. As believers, we are called to pray for peace and protection for the vulnerable, and to stand firm in the truth of God's Word even when darkness seems to prevail.

In a world marked by technological advances and geopolitical strife, the Christian community must remain anchored in the hope of Christ, who is the Prince of Peace. The discovery of ancient artifacts connects us to the biblical narrative and to God's faithfulness throughout history, encouraging us to trust His sovereign plan. Let us also remember those suffering from persecution and conflict, lifting them in prayer as we seek God's justice and mercy.

- Pray for protection and courage for believers facing persecution worldwide.
- Pray for wisdom and peace for leaders navigating complex geopolitical challenges.
- Pray for healing and hope for victims of terror and conflict, trusting in God's comfort.