



Global Watch Daily – December 17, 2025

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

Israel & Jerusalem

Israeli prosecutors are preparing to indict a 20-year-old Israeli citizen on charges of membership in ISIS and contact with a foreign agent, underscoring ongoing concerns about extremist affiliations within the country ([Times of Israel](#)). In a related story, relatives of a Muslim man who disarmed a terrorist in Sydney expressed pride in his actions, with family members noting broader admiration for what he did ([Times of Israel](#)). Meanwhile, Israel's Health Ministry directed residents of a central town to stay indoors due to toxic waste fires, highlighting ongoing environmental and public health pressures ([Times of Israel](#)).

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for global action against rising antisemitism while pointing to escalating tensions with Iran and delayed security funding for Jewish schools as urgent, interconnected concerns ([Israel365News](#)). Other commentary has argued for tougher approaches toward extremist ideology as a response to instability and violence ([Israel365News](#)). Additional reporting framed Israel as a refuge and moral beacon, urging broader recognition of its role amid global challenges ([Israel365News](#)).

Regionally, a Sweden-linked individual accused of spying for Mossad is on trial in Iran, reflecting continued espionage tensions ([JNS](#)). In the United Kingdom, police signaled stricter enforcement against chants such as "Globalize the intifada," reflecting heightened sensitivity to incitement and antisemitic rhetoric ([JNS](#)). Diplomatically, Ecuador inaugurated a Center for Innovation in Jerusalem, highlighting expanding international engagement in the city ([JNS](#)).

Human-rights concerns in Iran remained prominent, with rights groups warning that an Iranian boxer sentenced to death faces imminent execution ([Al-Monitor](#)). UK authorities also indicated plans for tougher responses to antisemitic chants and protest activity ([Al-Monitor](#)). Meanwhile, analysis continued regarding what comes next after the Gaza ceasefire and whether the truce can endure under renewed strains ([Al-Monitor](#)).



Broader regional instability persisted as the United States expanded a travel ban to include Syria and holders of Palestinian passports ([BBC](#)). An Iranian Nobel laureate was reportedly taken to the hospital after what was described as a violent arrest, drawing renewed scrutiny to the treatment of dissidents ([BBC](#)). In Syria, an Islamic State gunman killed three Americans, underscoring continuing threats in the theater ([BBC](#)).

Israel-related security reporting included an IDF evacuation order for Tehran ahead of planned strikes ([Jerusalem Post](#)). The Defense Ministry announced a military exercise on Highway 35 ([Jerusalem Post](#)). Outside the region, a Ukrainian drone attack reportedly forced the closure of an airport in Moscow ([Jerusalem Post](#)).

Wars & Security (Israel and Region)

Hamas acknowledged the killing of senior commander Raed Saad, a significant development affecting leadership dynamics amid ongoing conflict ([Long War Journal](#)). In Syria, authorities investigated a deadly attack on U.S. forces, with the United States naming two National Guard soldiers among the victims ([Long War Journal](#)).

The terrorist attack at a Hanukkah lighting ceremony in Australia that killed at least 16 continued to reverberate internationally ([Long War Journal](#)). A related analysis examined the Bondi Beach terror attack and its broader implications ([FDD](#)).

Additional commentary urged expanded information-sharing with European partners amid threats attributed to China and Russia ([FDD](#)). Separately, FDD urged the FCC to account for cybersecurity needs as voice-calling systems modernize, emphasizing critical-infrastructure risk management ([FDD](#)).

Apostasy & Religious Developments

An article argued that acts of compassion by Muslims often go under-recognized amid broader narratives of Islamophobia, calling for a more nuanced public understanding ([Religion News Service](#)). In North American Anglicanism, Bishop Stewart Ruch was found not guilty on all counts after a contentious church trial, raising questions about governance, process, and accountability ([Religion News Service](#)).

In the Church of England context, the Dean of Canterbury Cathedral described feelings of alienation related to perceived inaction on LGBTQ+ rights, reflecting persistent institutional tensions ([Religion News Service](#)). The Gospel Coalition published reflections on two corrupted forms of Christianity, urging renewed discernment ([The Gospel Coalition](#)).



). Another piece emphasized the often-underestimated importance of greeting ministries in congregational life ([The Gospel Coalition](#)).

Open Doors highlighted persecution pressures in multiple contexts, including a tense Christmas season for Christians in Nigeria ([Open Doors](#)), a court-ordered probe into the caste status of Christians in India ([Open Doors](#)), and reports that Christian converts in Chhattisgarh were barred from ancestral burials ([Open Doors](#)).

Biotechnology & Genetic Engineering

New research suggests that kimchi may strengthen the immune response, underscoring ongoing interest in diet, the microbiome, and immune modulation ([ScienceDaily](#)). A new diagnostic test was reported to detect Alzheimer's disease before symptoms emerge, highlighting continued advances in early detection ([ScienceDaily](#)). Additional findings explored why some brains stop growing prematurely, contributing to the study of neurodevelopment ([ScienceDaily](#)).

In Nature publications, researchers described orthogonal RNA-regulated destabilization domains enabling three-color RNA imaging with minimal perturbation ([Nature](#)). Another paper presented a framework to reconstruct epigenomic dynamics by integrating single-cell multi-epigenome data ([Nature](#)). A survey of viral vector manufacturing centers assessed capacity and gaps, informing future biotech scale-up ([Nature](#)).

STAT News reported that stress can significantly elevate cardiovascular risk among people with anxiety and depression, reinforcing the need for integrated care approaches ([STAT News](#)). A year-end review assessed health AI predictions for 2025 and how expert forecasts performed ([STAT News](#)). Another commentary argued U.S. scientists should compete internationally for research funding to sustain global leadership ([STAT News](#)).

Pestilence & Global Health

Researchers reported an approach to preventing gum disease that preserves beneficial bacteria while targeting harmful pathogens ([ScienceDaily](#)). Another report identified viral candidates potentially associated with persistent long COVID symptoms ([ScienceDaily](#)). Children's anxiety and depression rates were reported to have fallen rapidly after schools reopened post-pandemic, highlighting the importance of community and routine for mental health ([ScienceDaily](#)).



The ECDC published an overview of avian influenza cases from September through November 2025 ([ECDC](#)). The communicable disease threats report for Week 49 (29 November–5 December 2025) provided updated regional monitoring (ECDC). The agency also outlined strategies to prevent transmission of avian and swine flu to humans ([ECDC](#)).

Natural Disasters & Signs in the Heavens

The World Earthquake Report for Wednesday, December 17, 2025, documented multiple tremors, including minor quakes in California near Borrego Springs, The Geysers, and San Ramon ([VolcanoDiscovery](#)), ([USGS](#)), ([USGS](#)), ([USGS](#)). Volcanic ash advisories were issued for Fuego and Semeru, with ash plumes reported up to 15,000 feet ([VolcanoDiscovery](#)), ([VolcanoDiscovery](#)).

NASA highlighted a “Siberian Snowman” formation in Billings, illustrating unusual seasonal patterns visible from above ([NASA Earth Observatory](#)). NASA’s IXPE mission completed its most extended observation and reported findings related to black hole jets ([NASA](#)). The agency also announced a research program aimed at students to explore big scientific ideas ([NASA](#)).

Global Macro & Geopolitics

In the UK, Prime Minister’s Questions featured Labour leader Keir Starmer pushing back against Conservative MP Kemi Badenoch, reflecting political tensions as the year closes ([Politico](#)). European leaders, including Italy’s Giorgia Meloni and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, increased pressure ahead of a major EU summit ([Politico](#)). Politico also reported that former U.S. President Donald Trump pressured the newly elected Czech Prime Minister regarding the acquisition of F-35 fighter jets ([Politico](#)).

France 24 reported Gaza’s winter rains and sewage impacts were linked to a deadly surge in disease, with at least 12 fatalities reported across related coverage ([France24](#)), ([France24](#)), ([France24](#)). The UK was reported to be set to rejoin the Erasmus student exchange programme as part of a post-Brexit reset ([France24](#)).

France 24 also highlighted civilians in Kyiv enduring nightly Russian attacks ([France24](#)) and reported that the EU eased its ban on internal combustion engine cars, a contentious policy shift ([France24](#)).

BBC reporting included the charging of Nick Reiner with the murder of his parents in the UK ([BBC](#)), Keir Starmer urging Roman Abramovich to “pay up now” or face court ([BBC](#)),



and allegations that the United States employed illegal workers at a refugee processing center in South Africa ([BBC](#)).

The Diplomat examined whether the ASEAN Way can survive 2026 ([The Diplomat](#)). It also reported that Australia's National Cabinet agreed to a sweeping overhaul of gun laws in response to the Bondi massacre ([The Diplomat](#)) and covered the conviction of a pro-democracy publisher in Hong Kong on sedition charges ([The Diplomat](#)).

Middle Eastern Artifacts

Archaeological discoveries continue to shed light on Jerusalem's history. A rare 1,300-year-old lead pendant decorated with a menorah symbol was uncovered north of the City of David ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)). An Assyrian inscription dating from the First Temple period was also reported ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)).

The City of David also reported the uncovering of the largest dam in ancient Israel ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)) and a rare gold coin of Egyptian Queen Berenice II, underscoring historical links between Israel and Egypt ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)).

Reflection

The headlines remind us that turmoil in nations is never merely political; it is also spiritual, revealing how fear and hatred can spread when truth is rejected. As believers, we are called to pray for wisdom for leaders, protection for the vulnerable, and courage for those who stand against violence, while trusting the Lord to sustain His people in confusing days.

At the same time, discoveries from Jerusalem's soil point us back to the long arc of God's faithfulness through history. May the church respond to today's conflicts with sober clarity, steadfast compassion, and a renewed commitment to seek peace, speak truth, and strengthen the persecuted body of Christ worldwide.

- Pray for peace and protection over Israel and its neighbors.
- Pray for wisdom and integrity for leaders addressing conflict and security.
- Pray for the persecuted church to be strengthened, protected, and encouraged.