



Global Watch Daily – December 20, 2025

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

Israel & Jerusalem

Israeli police have opened an investigation after a woman deliberately blew out Hanukkah candles in a Tel Aviv mall, an act that has stirred public concern over respect for Jewish traditions and religious symbols ([Times of Israel](#)). At the Turning Point USA conference, tensions erupted openly within the MAGA movement over differing views on Israel, highlighting the complex political and ideological debates surrounding U.S.-Israel relations ([Times of Israel](#)).

The so-called ‘Reddit Detective Agency’ played a pivotal role in the investigation of the Brown killer, significantly advancing the case through crowdsourced efforts and digital sleuthing ([Times of Israel](#)). The United States has carried out large-scale retaliatory strikes against ISIS targets in Syria, responding to recent attacks and aiming to degrade the terrorist group’s operational capabilities ([Al-Monitor](#)). The BBC reported on the U.S. ‘massive’ strike against the Islamic State in Syria, confirming the intensity and scale of the military response ([BBC](#)). The U.S. continues to emphasize its anti-Islamic State operations following the deaths of soldiers in Syria, reaffirming its strategic objectives in the region ([Foundation for Defense of Democracies](#)). Behind the scenes of the recently released film about King David reveal aspects of the story the movie could not portray, offering more profound insights into the biblical figure’s life and legacy ([Israel365 News](#)).

Israel is asserting its strength as its allies confront rising antisemitism, legal challenges known as lawfare, and shifting regional power dynamics, underscoring the nation’s resilience and strategic importance ([Israel365 News](#)).

Christmas celebrations are making a notable comeback in Israel, a development that carries significance beyond tourism and reflects a revival of Christian traditions in the Holy Land ([Israel365 News](#)).

The head of the European Commission warned that ‘the old evil is once again rearing its head,’ a statement widely interpreted as a reference to the resurgence of antisemitism in Europe ([JNS](#)). Thousands of Israelis have received threatening text messages from



operatives linked to Tehran, raising concerns about espionage and psychological warfare targeting Israeli citizens ([JNS](#)). The Israel Defense Forces have issued an evacuation order for Tehran ahead of planned strikes, signaling heightened military readiness and escalating tensions ([Jerusalem Post](#)). Iran executed a man accused of spying for Israel, according to the judiciary's news outlet, underscoring the high tensions and severe consequences faced by alleged intelligence operatives in the region ([Al-Monitor](#)).

The sister of the last hostage held in Gaza made a heartfelt plea for their release at the United Nations, highlighting the ongoing humanitarian crisis and the desperate need for diplomatic intervention ([JNS](#)). Palestinians have told the BBC they were sexually abused in Israeli prisons, raising serious human rights concerns and calls for an investigation ([BBC](#)). UN-backed experts report that food supplies in Gaza are improving, though approximately 100,000 people remain in 'catastrophic conditions,' highlighting the ongoing humanitarian challenges ([BBC](#)). The Israeli Defense Ministry announced it will conduct a military exercise on Highway 35 on Sunday afternoon, part of continuing preparedness efforts ([Jerusalem Post](#)).

Australian lifesavers have returned to duty at Bondi Beach following a recent massacre, restoring a sense of safety and normalcy to the community ([Al-Monitor](#)).

Wars & Security (Israel and Region)

The United States launched widespread airstrikes against Islamic State positions in Syria following a deadly attack in Palmyra, aiming to disrupt terrorist operations and prevent further violence ([Long War Journal](#)). U.S. military officials highlighted ongoing anti-Islamic State operations after several soldiers were killed in Syria, emphasizing the continued commitment to combating terrorism in the region ([Long War Journal](#)). An analysis titled 'Generation Jihad' explores the complex dynamics of fighting terror with terror, reflecting on the challenges of counterterrorism strategies in the Middle East ([Long War Journal](#)).

A Ukrainian drone attack on Moscow forced the closure of an airport, according to Russian authorities, reflecting the continuing conflict and use of advanced technology in warfare ([Jerusalem Post](#)). Ukraine struck Russia's 'shadow fleet' tanker in the Mediterranean, disrupting Russian maritime logistics and signaling the ongoing conflict's reach beyond immediate battle zones ([Foundation for Defense of Democracies](#)). Experts warn that Chinese economic statecraft poses a national security threat to the United States, highlighting the geopolitical competition between the two powers ([Foundation for Defense of Democracies](#)).



Apostasy & Religious Developments

An article reflecting on John Calvin's preference for the Lord's Day over Christmas emphasizes holiness beyond holidays, encouraging believers to focus on worship and sanctification rather than mere celebrations ([The Gospel Coalition](#)). Martin Luther's joyful approach to Christmas is highlighted in a feature titled 'Sing, Dear Children,' underscoring the Reformation's embrace of music and celebration in Christian life ([The Gospel Coalition](#)). Forrest Frank and his wife, Grace, are rejoicing over the birth of their baby boy, Sonny, celebrating new life and family blessings during the Christmas season ([Crosswalk](#)). Millions of Christians around the world must secretly celebrate Christmas due to persecution and restrictions, highlighting the ongoing challenges faced by believers in hostile environments ([Open Doors USA](#)). Five Iranian Christians have been sentenced to prison, reflecting the continued persecution of believers in Iran and the cost of faith in oppressive regimes ([Open Doors USA](#)).

A podcast episode reflects on 20 years of God's faithfulness, encouraging listeners to remember and celebrate God's sustaining grace throughout life's challenges ([The Gospel Coalition](#)). An article titled 'Rising Through Faith' shares stories of perseverance and hope among persecuted Christians, encouraging believers to remain steadfast ([Open Doors USA](#)). Candace Cameron Bure shared her commitment to being bold for Jesus, expressing her desire to be on God's side of history amid cultural challenges ([Crosswalk](#)).

The Brown University shooter was found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, a tragic event that has prompted discussions on mental health and campus safety ([Crosswalk](#)).

Biotechnology & Genetic Engineering

Scientists have made a breakthrough in understanding the 'junk DNA' that comprises 98% of the human genome, discovering links to Alzheimer's disease that could lead to new treatments ([ScienceDaily](#)). In a medical milestone, doctors successfully transplanted two new organs into an 11-year-old patient, marking a historic achievement in regenerative medicine ([ScienceDaily](#)). Research indicates that helping others for just a few hours a week may slow brain aging, suggesting a powerful connection between altruism and cognitive health ([ScienceDaily](#)).

A new technique involving injectable biological hydrogels has been developed to create a rich vascular subcutaneous space for cell transplantation, advancing therapeutic possibilities ([Nature](#)). Comparative studies on four Lagerstroemia indica cultivars reveal



their tolerance and phytoremediation potential under cadmium stress, contributing to environmental biotechnology ([Nature](#)). Researchers have developed a holistic valorisation process that turns lemon peel into textile materials using fungal chitosan and micro- and nano-fibrillated cellulose, showcasing sustainable innovation ([Nature](#)). The FDA approved Cytokinetics' new heart drug, Myqorzo, marking the biotech company's first major regulatory success and offering hope for heart failure patients ([STAT News](#)). Drugmakers have promised to stockpile certain medications as part of new drug pricing deals, aiming to ensure supply stability amid evolving healthcare policies ([STAT News](#)).

Francis Collins, former director of the NIH, expressed in an interview that he views science as 'glimpsing God's mind,' reflecting a harmonious relationship between faith and scientific inquiry ([STAT News](#)).

Pestilence & Global Health

Researchers have developed a new method to prevent gum disease that preserves beneficial bacteria, offering a promising alternative to traditional treatments that often disrupt oral microbiomes ([ScienceDaily](#)).

Scientists have identified viral suspects that may contribute to long COVID symptoms, advancing understanding of the condition and potential therapeutic targets ([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 for mental health ([ScienceDaily](#)).

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) released an overview of avian influenza cases from September to November 2025, providing critical data for ongoing surveillance and response efforts ([ECDC](#)). The ECDC also published its weekly communicable disease threats report for late November to early December 2025, monitoring emerging health risks across Europe ([ECDC](#)). ECDC outlined new strategies to combat avian and swine flu in humans, emphasizing preparedness and coordinated public health responses ([ECDC](#)).

Natural Disasters & Signs in the Heavens

Volcanic activity continues worldwide with notable eruptions and alerts at Santiaguito, Pacaya, Fuego, Popocatépetl, Soputan, Talang, Merapi, and Semeru volcanoes, as reported on December 20, 2025 ([Volcano Discovery](#)). A volcanic ash advisory was issued for



Dukono Volcano, with ash observed at flight level 070 and moving northeast, posing potential hazards to aviation ([Volcano Discovery](#)).

The World Earthquake Report for December 20, 2025, details recent seismic events globally, including minor tremors in California near Lake Henshaw, Idyllwild, and Searles Valley ([Volcano Discovery](#)).

NASA released a feature on wind-sculpted landscapes on Mars, investigating the formation of the Martian megaripple known as 'Hazyview,' advancing planetary science ([NASA](#)). NASA also shared the crew assignments for the SpaceX Crew-12 mission to the International Space Station, marking important milestones in human space exploration ([NASA](#)). Johnson Space Center highlighted its 2025 milestones, showcasing achievements in space science and technology development ([NASA](#)).

Global Macro & Geopolitics

The Trump administration continues to release files related to Jeffrey Epstein, fueling ongoing public and political scrutiny over the case and its connections ([Politico](#)). A guide titled '5 Rules for Reading the Epstein Files' offers insight into understanding the complex and sensitive information contained in the documents ([Politico](#)). The Epstein files have placed former President Bill Clinton under renewed scrutiny, with the White House reportedly wanting him to remain involved in related discussions ([Politico](#)). A BBC article provides an overview of the individuals and information contained in the Epstein files, contributing to public understanding of the case ([BBC](#)).

The United Nations reports that the famine in Gaza is over, but the humanitarian situation remains critical, requiring continued international attention and aid ([France24](#)). Since July 2024, more than 1,000 patients have died while awaiting evacuation from Gaza, underscoring the dire medical and humanitarian crisis in the region ([France24](#)). The United States launched retaliatory strikes on Islamic State group targets in Syria, responding to recent attacks and aiming to degrade the group's capabilities ([France24](#)).

Ukraine struck a Russian shadow fleet tanker in the Mediterranean Sea, further disrupting Russian supply lines amid ongoing conflict ([France24](#)). Russian strikes on Ukraine's Odesa have killed several and wounded dozens, as diplomatic talks between U.S. and Russian officials continue in Florida ([France24](#)). Russia's drone supply network, enabled by China, is reshaping modern warfare by enhancing Russia's unmanned capabilities, according to recent analysis ([The Diplomat](#)).



The French government has warned farmers against Christmas blockades protesting a cattle cull, highlighting tensions between agricultural sectors and authorities ([France24](#)).

The U.S. carried out a 'massive' strike against the Islamic State in Syria, as reported by the BBC, confirming the scale of military operations ([BBC](#)).

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife received additional jail terms related to a state gift fraud case, reflecting ongoing political and legal challenges ([BBC](#)).

Despite the U.S. selling H200 AI chips to China, the expected Chinese purchases have not materialized, raising questions about technology transfer and trade dynamics ([The Diplomat](#)). U.S. arms sales to Taiwan continue, signaling policy continuity amid regional tensions and strategic competition with China ([The Diplomat](#)).

Middle Eastern Artifacts

Archaeologists uncovered a rare 1,300-year-old lead pendant decorated with a menorah symbol north of the City of David, shedding light on Jewish heritage in the region ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)).

An Assyrian inscription dating from the First Temple period was discovered, providing valuable historical insights into the ancient Near East ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)).

The largest dam from ancient Israel has been uncovered in the City of David, revealing advanced water management techniques used by early inhabitants ([City of David - News in Antiquities](#)).

A rare gold coin of Egyptian Queen Berenice II was discovered in the City of David, highlighting the region's rich historical connections and trade relations ([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 amidst political, social, and spiritual turmoil. The resurgence of ancient artifacts alongside modern conflicts underscores the enduring significance of this land in God's redemptive plan. As believers, we are called to pray for peace, justice, and the protection of innocent lives, trusting in God's sovereign hand over history.



In the face of global unrest, persecution, and scientific breakthroughs, the Christian community must hold fast to the hope found in Christ. The courage of persecuted believers and the pursuit of truth in science reflect God's sustaining grace and wisdom. May we be bold in our faith, compassionate in our actions, and steadfast in our prayers as we navigate these complex times.

- Pray for peace and protection over Israel and Jerusalem, that God's will be done in this pivotal region.
- Lift up persecuted Christians worldwide, especially those who must secretly celebrate their faith.
- Ask God for wisdom and guidance for leaders and scientists working to advance healing and justice.