

# Daily media briefing

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**Wed, 11 Oct 2023**

## [FGM ban in the Gambia under threat as calls grow to repeal law](#)

Women's rights campaigners denounce 'hugely regressive' proposals from political and religious leaders to decriminalise practice.

The Guardian

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## [Chants of 'gas the Jews' heard at pro-Palestinian protest in Sydney](#)

Australian police said on Tuesday they were investigating a protest outside Sydney Opera House.

iNews\*

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**Tue, 10 Oct 2023**

## [Sunak vows solidarity with Israel at synagogue as duelling rallies held in London](#)

Prime minister promises to keep Jews safe amid antisemitism concerns; 10 British Jews feared dead or missing in the Hamas attacks.

Times of Israel

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### **Independent Safeguarding Board Review sets deadline for evidence submission**

The ISB's collapse has exacerbated an ongoing safeguarding crisis within the Church of England, with numerous victims and survivors saying they have felt marginalised and overlooked.

Premier Christian News

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### **The Exorcist Believer: a real priest on why the film is 'potentially dangerous'**

Conveying the message that exorcism is an essentially positive and universal practice shared by many cultures, is potentially dangerous.

The Conversation

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### **In Poland, church and state draw nearer, and some Catholic faithful rebel**

"There's a strong link between the church and the bad things happening in Polish politics," Gala, now an atheist, told The Associated Press.

AP News

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### **Fearing ostracism or worse, many nonbelievers hide their views in the Middle East and North Africa**

In the Middle East and North Africa, where religion is often ingrained in daily life's very fabric, rejecting faith can come with consequences.

Independent

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### **US: Louisiana principal apologizes for punishing student's off-campus dancing**

At a meeting in his office with the assistant principal, St Pierre told the student she wasn't "living in the Lord's way", her mother said, according to the Advocate.

The Guardian

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### **'If India ordered the killing of a Sikh leader in Canada, the world must act'**

"Sikh dissidents expressing their support for an independent state face increasing risks", writes Prabjot Singh.

The Guardian

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**Mon, 9 Oct 2023**

### **Fears secular Uplands Primary School could become a 'faith school'**

Parents have raised fears that a primary school could become a "faith school" if its conversion to an academy goes ahead.

Bracknell News

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### **Christian teacher sacked by CofE school after refusing to teach "extreme" LGBT lessons**

A Christian teacher faces losing her career after allegedly refusing to teach "extreme LGBT ideology" at a Church of England secondary school.

The Telegraph\*

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### **Bill to create abortion clinic buffer zones published at Holyrood**

A bill to tackle anti-abortion protests outside health facilities in Scotland has been published at Holyrood.

The National

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### **Met increases patrols in London after reports of Israel attack celebrations**

The Metropolitan police have said they have increased patrols in London after receiving reports of people celebrating the attack on Israel by Hamas.

The Guardian

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## **Meet the 'nones': An ever increasing group across Europe with little to no religious affiliation**

"They're called the "nones" and are growing in numbers every day. It's a term for those increasingly rejecting organised religion, even in countries in which faith is typically at the core of their very identity."

Euronews

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## **'The mothers that Ireland forgot'**

The story of the Magdalene laundries is one of institutional power, and a society inured to the sacrifice of women and children to religious dogma. It's a story that the Irish public is still struggling to come to terms with.

Unherd

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## **Ban on caste discrimination deemed 'unnecessary' by California governor**

California activists against caste discrimination faced a defeat on Saturday as Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed the bill that would add caste to a list of protected categories under the state's existing anti-discrimination laws.

The Guardian

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## **Muslims in Kenya protest at Supreme Court over its endorsement of LGBTQ right to associate**

Hundreds of Muslims in Kenya's capital rallied Friday outside the Supreme Court to protest its decision last month to reaffirm the LGBTQ community's right of association, saying that the verdict condoned immorality and demanding that some justices step down.

Associated Press

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## **US tourist arrested for smashing 'blasphemous' Roman-era statues at Israel Museum**

An American tourist was arrested on Thursday for allegedly destroying statues inside the Israel Museum in Jerusalem that offended his religious sensibilities.

The Times of Israel

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## **'Police said I'm in danger': Sikh activists on edge worldwide after Vancouver killing**

The Khalistan movement is banned in India, but in Canada, activists have long campaigned for the cause. Now activists around the world are facing the stark truth that such campaigning may be putting them at risk.

The Guardian

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## **Narges Mohammadi: Iranian woman jailed for rights work wins Nobel Peace prize**

Imprisoned Iranian human rights activist Narges Mohammadi has won the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize.

BBC

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**Fri, 6 Oct 2023**

## **Survivors' complaint against Church of England secretary-general stalls**

A complaint brought by survivors of abuse against the secretary-general of the Archbishops' Council, William Nye, over his management of church safeguarding, has stalled, a letter hosted on the House of Survivors website says.

Church Times\*

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## **Well-being study finds class divide among Church of England clergy**

Working-class clergy are "deeply alienated from a church culture that favours and naturalises middle-class ways", a report commissioned by the Church's National Ministry Team concludes.

Church Times\*

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### **40% of priests lack confidence in Church of England safeguarding**

A poll of almost 1,200 active Church of England clergy found that 4 in 10 expressed some lack of confidence in the Church's safeguarding systems.

The Times\*

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### **Jews are victims of one in six religious hate crimes, while making up less than 1% of UK population**

Jews are the victim of over a sixth of religious hate crimes, despite making up a tiny fraction of the UK population, a Home Office report for England and Wales shows.

Jewish News

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### **Northern Ireland Safe Access Zones: First arrest by PSNI over abortion clinic buffer zones 'is devout Catholic woman'**

The first person in Northern Ireland to be arrested in relation to new abortion clinic buffer zones appears to be a devout Catholic woman who was on her knees praying when approached by police.

News Letter

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### **Church primary schools take fewer special-needs pupils than non-church schools, study says**

Church primary schools in England take proportionally fewer pupils with disabilities or special needs than non-church schools, making the former "hubs of relative advantage", new research from the London School of Economics (LSE) concludes.

Church Times\*

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## **Women granted right to vote for first time in Vatican annual meeting**

Women have been granted the right to vote in the Vatican's annual meeting, as the church attempts to take strides towards progressive reform.

ITV

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## **Imams and sheikhs to urge Australian Muslims to back voice during Friday prayers**

Most imams and sheikhs will urge Australian Muslims to back the Indigenous voice to parliament during Friday prayer sermons, according to the Australian National Imam's Council (ANIC), which has launched a final push in support of the referendum.

The Guardian

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## **Philippines 'Jesus' drag queen arrested for obscenity**

A Philippines drag queen was arrested on Wednesday over their performance as Jesus Christ reciting the Lord's Prayer. A video of the performance by Pura Luka Vega had sparked criminal complaints by Christian groups in July.

BBC

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**Thu, 5 Oct 2023**

## **Abortion: Two arrests under new protest buffer zone law**

Two people have been arrested at an anti-abortion protest outside the Causeway Hospital near Coleraine, County Londonderry.

BBC

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## **Government minister criticises Tory Mayoral candidate Susan Hall over Jewish comments**

A Government minister has criticised Susan Hall for claiming Jewish Londoners are "frightened" of Sadiq Khan.

Evening Standard

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## **Pope Francis pushes to 'open church to all' as critics accuse him of 'poisoning' Catholicism**

Pope Francis has urged critical Catholic leaders to set aside internal politics and focus on making the Church more welcoming, as he opened an influential gathering of bishops that critics have claimed will "poison" the faith.

The Independent\*

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## **America's nonreligious are a growing, diverse phenomenon. They really don't like organized religion**

The decades-long rise of the nones — a diverse, hard-to-summarize group — is one of the most talked about phenomena in U.S. religion. They are reshaping America's religious landscape as we know it.

Associated Press

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## **'We don't exist': Pakistan's Ahmadi minority living in fear**

Ahmadis, who number around 10 million worldwide, consider themselves Muslims, and their faith is identical to mainstream Islam in almost every way. But their belief that the movement's founder Mirza Ghulam was the "mahdi" or messiah has marked them blasphemous unbelievers, in Pakistan in particular.

Bangkok Post

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## **Nonreligious struggle to find their voice and place in Indian society and politics**

Despite India's millennia-old history of nonreligious movements, most atheists and rationalists choose to keep quiet about their skepticism of faith — it's easier and far less risky than going public in one of the world's most religious countries.

Associated Press

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## **Israel is perennially swept up in religious conflict. Yet many of its citizens are secular**

Israel is a nation perennially swept up in religious fervor and conflict. And yet, strikingly, a large portion of its population is secular, and even its insular ultra-Orthodox community loses a steady stream of members who tire of its strict religious rules.

Associated Press

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## **Fearing ostracism or worse, many nonbelievers hide their views in the Middle East and North Africa**

Aware that rejecting religion can come with repercussions, many in the Middle East and North Africa vigilantly conceal that part of themselves. Declaring disbelief may spur social stigma, ostracism by loved ones or even unleash threats or the wrath of authorities, especially if going public is coupled with real or perceived attacks on religion or God.

Associated Press

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## **An atheist in northern Nigeria was arrested. Then the attacks against the others worsened**

In parts of the world, the religiously unaffiliated are on the rise, and can safely and publicly be a "none" — someone who identifies as an atheist, agnostic or nothing in particular. In countries like Nigeria, the situation is starkly different.

Associated Press

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**Wed, 4 Oct 2023**

## **SEND pupils less likely to go to primary faith schools**

Children with special educational needs are more likely to attend a non-faith-based primary school than one run by a Church of England or Catholic diocese, research shows.

TES\*

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## **Sikh separatists gather in London to protest after activists' deaths**

Supporters of the Sikh separatist Khalistan movement gathered outside the Indian high commission in central London to call for the UK government to stand alongside Canada after the killing of a prominent Sikh leader.

The Guardian

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## **Clergy abuse survivors propose new 'zero tolerance' law following outcry over Vatican appointment**

Clergy sexual abuse survivors on Monday unveiled a proposed new church law calling for the permanent removal of abusive priests and superiors who covered for them, as they stepped up their outrage over Pope Francis' choice to head the Vatican office that investigates sex crimes.

Associated Press

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## **US: Bankruptcy court pauses sexual abuse suits against Catholic parishes, schools**

A federal bankruptcy court Tuesday temporarily blocked sexual abuse lawsuits against parishes, schools or other entities related to the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

The Washington Post\*

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## **Seychelles opposition leader Patrick Herminie charged with witchcraft**

The main opposition leader in Seychelles, Patrick Herminie, has been charged with witchcraft, along with seven others.

BBC

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## **Outrage over Jerusalem video of ultra-Orthodox Jews spitting as Christians pass**

A video of ultra-Orthodox Jews spitting on the ground beside a procession of foreign Christian worshippers carrying a wooden cross in the holy city of Jerusalem has ignited intense outrage and

a flurry of condemnation in the Holy Land.

The Guardian

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## **Hospitalisation of Iranian girl leads to claims against ‘morality police’**

Incident puts country back on edge a year after mass protests over death in custody of Mahsa Amini.

The Guardian

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## **A Nepal town imposes a lockdown and beefs up security to prevent clashes between Hindus and Muslims**

Despite quickly escalating tensions between Hindus and Muslims, the night passed peacefully after a lockdown was imposed and security heightened in a city in southwest Nepal, officials said.

Associated Press

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## **The 8-year-old boy at the heart of a fight over Tibetan Buddhism**

A young boy in Mongolia has been named to one of the most important positions in Tibetan Buddhism, drawing the country deeper into the political chess match between China and the Dalai Lama.

The New York Times\*

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## **The team that Turkey’s religious right loves to hate**

Turkey's women's volleyball team is not just a group of athletes – they embody so much more. In recent years, they have come to represent the ongoing societal tension within Turkey between secularists and Islamist conservatives.

The New European

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**Tue, 3 Oct 2023**

## [Faith primary schools admit fewer children with special educational needs and disabilities, says research – NSS quoted](#)

Christian primary schools are admitting fewer children with special educational needs and disabilities than local authority community schools, according to research from the London School of Economics (LSE).

The i\*

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## [Susan Hall: Tory mayoral candidate criticised for suggesting Jewish people 'frightened' by Sadiq Khan](#)

The Conservative candidate for London mayor Susan Hall has been accused of "dog whistle" politics after suggesting some Jewish Londoners are "frightened" of Sadiq Khan.

Evening Standard

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