

Daily media briefing

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Wed, 22 Nov 2023

[China: Human Rights Watch accuses Beijing of closing and destroying mosques](#)

The crackdown is part of a "systematic effort" to curb the practice of Islam in China, Human Rights Watch said.

BBC

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[US: Catholic priest who avoided charges marries teen he fled to Italy with](#)

Crow – an expert in the theological study of demons and exorcism – had his clerical duties removed after going to Italy with the teen and indicating he would never return to the US.

The Guardian

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[Germany: Top protestant church official resigns](#)

Kurschus said she decided that the loss of public trust meant she could no longer help the church's work dealing with historical cases of sexual abuse.

Deutsche Welle

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Tue, 21 Nov 2023

Lib Dem peer's bill seeks disestablishment of Church of England

Liberal Democrat peer Lord Scriven said that his bill on disestablishment was "long overdue" and that the Church of England's current status was "a historic quirk".

Christian Today

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Church of Scotland in unholy row with parishioners after it shut 900-year-old church

Members of the flock at Birnie Kirk accuse religious leaders of disrespecting 'country folk' after place of worship is closed to save cash.

The Telegraph

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Letters: We must fight antisemitism on UK campuses

Mark Rusling says that a university education is clearly no inoculation against anti-Jewish racism, and Lynne Davies is appalled that Jewish students are being targeted at UK institutions.

The Guardian

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Obama, Clooney and Gates: 'We can end child marriage in a generation'

Three of the world's most influential women have told BBC News they want to end child marriage within a generation.

BBC

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Blasphemy laws and human rights of religious minorities in Bangladesh

Much of an alarming rise in attacks on religious minorities in Bangladesh has been because of perceived religious offence, commonly covered by the term 'blasphemy'.

LSE

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France: Bishop accused of attempted rape in latest scandal to hit Catholic Church

French investigative website Mediapart reported that senior figures in the Catholic Church were aware of the accusations for years.

Independent

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US: Hundreds more United Methodist congregations disaffiliate amid LGBTQ+ tensions

Over 7,000 congregations have been approved to break away since 2019, when church strengthened bans on same-sex marriage.

The Guardian

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US: Some progressives are arguing for a religious right to abortion

The Supreme Court's deference to faith-based objectors has buoyed their claims.

The Economist*

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Fears of abortion setback after Milei wins in Argentina

Newly elected president and far-right libertarian has vowed to repeal country's 2020 landmark legalisation of abortion.

The Guardian

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Mon, 20 Nov 2023

Teachers adopting 'de facto blasphemy code' by censoring lessons

A fifth of teachers are censoring their lessons to avoid potentially causing offence over issues surrounding race, gender and sexuality, a survey has found.

The Times*

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English courts order Vatican to disclose sensitive emails in 'trial of the century'

The Vatican has been ordered by the English courts to reveal highly sensitive emails and texts between senior clerics despite claiming such disclosure would be a "grave sin."

The Telegraph*

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First paedophile banned from church allowed to sing in choir despite catalogue of child abuse

The first paedophile to be banned from church because he posed a "significant and real" threat to children was allowed to return to worship and join a choir, it can be revealed.

The Telegraph*

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Archbishop of Canterbury apologises to LGBT campaigner after comparing her to militia leader

The Archbishop of Canterbury has apologised to a Christian LGBT+ campaigner after comparing her to the leader of a militia, the Telegraph can disclose.

The Telegraph*

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Conservative C of E group to minister for clergy who reject same-sex blessings

The Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC) is to offer alternative episcopal ministry for clergy and congregations that oppose the introduction of blessings for same-sex couples.

Church Times*

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Mormon leaders accused of 'covering up' a decades-long 'epidemic' of sexual abuse and incest

Mormon leaders are 'covering up' an 'epidemic' of sexual abuse that rivals scandals exposed within the Catholic church, victims have alleged.

Daily Mail

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Ohio Catholic priest gets life sentence for sex-trafficking convictions

A Roman Catholic priest received a life sentence Friday for his convictions on five counts related to sex-trafficking charges in the molestation of three boys who prosecutors say he met at an Ohio preschool and coerced to continue sexual activity as adults.

Associated Press

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Tensions rise in Jerusalem as settlers target Armenians

With international attention focused on the bombardment of Gaza and on settler attacks in the West Bank, Armenians in the Old City of Jerusalem say they are facing perhaps their most serious existential threat in the 16 centuries since they first settled there.

The Times*

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Fri, 17 Nov 2023

Church attendance still below pre-pandemic levels

The number of people going to Church of England services has risen for the third year in a row, but remains lower than pre-pandemic levels.

The Telegraph*

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Mosques condemn Labour MPs for failing to vote for Gaza ceasefire as protesters march on office

British Muslims and a coalition of mosques have condemned Labour MPs who failed to vote for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war.

Independent*

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'Why is antisemitism so rife in UK academic settings? I have never found student life more difficult'

British campuses have seen more incidents of antisemitism in a month than in all of 2022, but support and understanding are in short supply.

The Guardian

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Antisemitism and Islamophobia 'major drivers' of hate crime, equality body says

Police forces and the government should tackle antisemitism and Islamophobia as "major drivers" of hate crime levels in England and Wales, an equality body has said.

Jewish News

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German police launch nationwide raid on suspected pro-Hezbollah Islamist group

German police have raided 54 locations across the country connected to an Islamist organisation suspected of supporting the activities of Hezbollah.

The Jewish Chronicle

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US: Lawyers for religious leaders challenging Missouri abortion ban say law imposes beliefs on everyone

Missouri lawmakers intended to "impose their religious beliefs on everyone" in the state when they passed a restrictive abortion ban, lawyers for a group of religious leaders who support abortion rights said at a court hearing Thursday.

Associated Press

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Thu, 16 Nov 2023

Church of England backs plans for trial blessings of same-sex weddings

Dedicated church services to bless the weddings of same-sex couples could be held within weeks, after a narrow vote at the Church of England ruling body.

The Guardian

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Charity Commission assessing 'significant number' of antisemitic and hate speech concerns

The Charity Commission is assessing a "significant number of serious concerns" regarding some charities' activities in relation to the conflict in Israel and Palestine.

Civil Society

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Anglican bishops reject leader Justin Welby over gay marriage

Several Anglican bishops said they no longer recognise Justin Welby as their leader, deepening a rift within the global Anglican Communion over gay marriage.

Independent*

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'British evangelicals want to control our schools'

"A new crop of hardline Christian fundamentalists think they should decide what's taught in British classrooms. They're just as sinister as their US counterparts"

The New European

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Muslim anti-LGBT groups descend on Coldplay's first concert in Indonesia

Hundreds of conservative Muslims protested outside Coldplay's first ever concert in Indonesia on Wednesday, clashing with police and booing concertgoers over the band's support for the LGBT community.

The Telegraph*

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Iran's secret police launch new raids on Baha'i faith

Iranian secret police have arrested 19 adherents of the Baha'i faith, in fresh measures against the persecuted religion.

The Telegraph*

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Man killed three generations of Canadian family to make 'all Muslims fearful for their safety', court hears

A 22-year-old Canadian man accused of killing three generations of a family in Ontario in 2021 wanted to send a "brutal message" to all Muslims, a jury was told on Wednesday.

Independent*

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Wed, 15 Nov 2023

Bill to disestablish Church of England to be introduced in parliament – NSS quoted

A bill to disestablish the Church of England will be introduced in parliament, after being selected from the House of Lords private members' bill ballot, following the state opening of parliament on 7 November.

Ekklesia

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Activist who led march alongside Corbyn glorified October 7 terror

A leading Palestinian activist who has led anti-Israel marches in London glorified Hamas's attacks that saw the slaughter of Israeli civilians.

The Jewish Chronicle

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Gafcon Primates offer sanctuary for conservatives if same-sex votes go against them

The debate on same-sex relationships in the General Synod this week is being watched closely by conservative Anglicans around the world, who have offered a refuge for English conservatives if the Synod votes to allow the blessing of same-sex couples in church.

Church Times*

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Letter: There's no justification now for Catholic schools

"Scotland is now home to people of many different religions and also a home to a great many of us with no religious beliefs. There can be no justification for continuing to provide separate schools for just one religious group just because it was persecuted one hundred years ago."

The Herald*

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Disagreements at Synod over who should foot the bill for abuse claims

The next step in establishing a national redress scheme for survivors of abuse in the Church of England was taken on Tuesday morning, after a debate in the General Synod.

Church Times*

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Beijing bishop visits Hong Kong amid tensions between China and Vatican

China's state-backed Bishop of Beijing visited Hong Kong on Tuesday amid fears among some Catholics that Beijing wants tighter control over religious affairs in Hong Kong.

Reuters

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Australia: Free speech advocates at odds with faith groups over NSW hate speech law overhaul

A move to overhaul the law criminalising hate speech in New South Wales following clashes across Sydney amid community tensions over the Israel-Hamas war has sparked debate over the limits of freedom of speech.

The Guardian

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US evangelicals drive Republican support for Israel

Evangelical conservatives are a key part of the Republican party's coalition, and these religious voters - and politicians - have a connection to the state of Israel that runs deep.

BBC

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Tue, 14 Nov 2023

Major police force hired psychiatrist who was exposed for practising conversion therapy

A major police force has been employing a psychiatrist who was previously exposed for practising conversion therapy — to clinically supervise its mental health staff.

The i*

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'The hijab is the wrong symbol to represent women'

Khadija Khan on why a hijab-clad statue in Birmingham is a faux pas, celebrating a symbol of oppression against women rather than their freedom and dignity.

The Freethinker

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UK charity 'employs Hamas commander'

A British charity has been accused of "collaborating with Hamas" and employing a commander from the terror group.

The Jewish Chronicle

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Muslim activist who led mosque call for Starmer to resign once declared: 'We are all Hamas'

A British Muslim activist who led an attempt to force Labour councillors to call for Keir Starmer to resign over his position on Gaza has previously openly spoken in support of Hamas.

Jewish News

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No one asked the Christians, but they're on Lebanon's front line

"Clinging on to the last vestiges of normality in the eerie twilight between peace and war in southern Lebanon, the remnants of the Christian community in Alma al-Shaab wake each morning not knowing if the new day will be worse than the last as Israeli forces and Hezbollah strike at one another from the surrounding terrain."

The Times*

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France accuses Russia of 'stoking tensions' with Stars of David graffiti

France has accused Russia of seeking to stoke "confusion" and "tensions" by spreading online images of graffiti in Paris that Jewish groups say is a throwback to the Holocaust.

The Times*

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Another Jewish school in Montreal hit by gunfire for second time in a week

A Jewish school in Montreal was hit by gunfire on Sunday, making it a target for the second time in less than a week amid heightened tensions over the conflict between Israel and Gaza, police said.

The Independent*

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Canada investigates alleged 'threats' against Air India after Sikh boycott call

Canadian officials and the Royal Canadian Mounted police are investigating alleged "threats" against Air India after a separatist leader warned Sikhs against flying with the airline on 19 November.

The Guardian

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Kenya doomsday cult leader found guilty of illegal filming, but yet to be charged over mass deaths

Paul Mackenzie, the Kenyan preacher at the centre of a doomsday cult in the country that led to the deaths of more than 400 people, was on Friday found guilty of operating a studio and distributing films without a license.

Associated Press

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