

# A WORLD IN MOTION

**P1 | UNITED STATES**

The shooting at a gay nightclub in Orlando has rocked the US, and is likely to have critical repercussions in a presidential election year.

**P2 |**

Hillary Clinton achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first female presumptive nominee, but still faces an uphill battle.

**P3 | SOUTH AFRICA**

With the US and UK both issuing warnings about possible terror threats in South Africa, many are wondering how serious this might be.

**P4 | PROJECTS**

PROJECT REFUGE supports various relief efforts by Christian workers seeking to reach out to refugees.



## THE NUMBERS: US SHOOTINGS



**288**

The number of victims of mass shootings (more than four injuries or fatalities) in the US this year so far



**88.8**

The number of guns per 100 people in the US (the highest ratio in the world)



**8%**

The surge in gun stocks when the markets opened on Monday after the Orlando shooting



**31%**

The percentage of the world's mass shootings that have occurred in the US (by far the highest percentage globally)

## ORLANDO SHOOTING ROCKS AMERICA



A man armed with an assault rifle killed 49 people [and wounded more than 50 others] at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, in the deadliest mass shooting in US history, a rampage President Barack Obama denounced as an act of terror and hate. Police killed the gunman, who was identified as Omar Mateen, 29, a New York-born Florida resident and US citizen who was the son of immigrants from Afghanistan and had twice been questioned by FBI agents in recent years. Law enforcement officials were probing evidence suggesting the attack may have been inspired by Islamic State militants, although they said there was no proof that Mateen had worked directly with the group. (IOL)

### What we know so far

According to the FBI, Omar Mateen first came to their attention in 2013, after he made "inflammatory comments" to co-workers that included allegations of possible "terrorist ties". Ron Hopper, head of the Orlando FBI, said that they were "unable to verify the substance of his comments", so Mateen was designated a non-threat and the investigation was closed.

Investigations in recent days have revealed that Mateen was reading and viewing Islamic extremist propaganda material, but it is still unclear whether he was actively engaged with the Islamic State (IS) and receiving direction from them, or whether he was a 'lone wolf' inspired by the group and desiring to be a part of what they are attempting to do beyond Iraq and

Syria's borders. USA Today reported that IS supporters used social media to praise the attack, while Amaq (the IS news agency) described Mateen as "an Islamic State fighter".

### Presidential candidates weigh in

Whether the attack in Orlando is eventually classified as a "mass shooting" or as a "terror attack", it is likely to play into the presidential campaigns in the coming months.

Presumptive Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton responded to the attack with the following statement: "This was an act of terror. For now, we can say for certain that we need to redouble our efforts to defend our country from threats at home and abroad. That means defeating international terror groups, working with allies and partners to go after them whenever they are, countering their attempts to recruit people here and everywhere and hardening our defences at home. It also means refusing to be intimidated and staying true to our values." Clinton is likely to say that the kind of statements that presumptive Republican candidate Donald Trump makes (for example, his call for a ban on all Muslims entering the country) exacerbate the situation, and that attacks like the Orlando shooting will become more common if he is elected president.

Donald Trump, meanwhile, responded to the Orlando shooting with the following tweet: "Appreciate the congrats for being right on radical terrorism, I don't want congrats, I want toughness and vigilance. We must be smart!" He also tweeted a criticism of President Obama: "Is President Obama going to finally mention the words radical Islamic terrorism? If he doesn't he should immediately resign in disgrace!" Trump is likely to point to the recent attack as an example of what a Clinton government would produce through the

# NEWS HEADLINES



Pilot Nadiya Savchenko called for early parliamentary elections to "infuse fresh blood" into **Ukraine's** politics, a call that could send shock waves across the volatile nation. Savchenko, 35, who has become a national icon in Ukraine after spending two years in a Russian prison, told *The Associated Press* that the "Ukrainian people deserve a better government that they now have."



Muslim allies of **Saudi Arabia** piled pressure on UN chief Ban Ki-moon over the blacklisting of a Saudi-led coalition for killing children in Yemen, with Riyadh threatening to cut Palestinian aid and funds to other UN programmes. The source said there was also a threat of "clerics in Riyadh meeting to issue a fatwa against the UN, declaring it anti-Muslim, which would mean no contacts of OIC members, no relations, contributions, support, to any UN projects, programmes."



**North Korea** has restarted production of plutonium fuel, a senior US State Department official said, showing that it plans to pursue its nuclear weapons programme in defiance of international sanctions.

seeking of diplomatic solutions to extremism, and he has promised to pursue possible threats (such as Mateen) more aggressively.

## FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

The US is likely to remain a target for extremist Islamic attacks as they continue their military campaigns in the Muslim world, which are described by radicals as modern-day Christian Crusades.

Meanwhile, US voters are facing the prospect of choosing between two 'professing Christians', both of whom have policies that will have international repercussions. Trump's approach, which could include aggressive action towards the families of Muslim extremists, is likely to result in further persecution of Christians in Muslim-majority countries. Clinton's approach is likely to mirror that of the current Obama administration: diplomacy at all costs, without taking into account the spiritual nature of the battle.

Donald Trump could 'add fuel to the flames' of Muslim anger against the West, while Clinton's gender could be interpreted (by those who see women as second-rate citizens) as an indication of the US' growing weakness.

Either way, Mateen is almost certainly not going to be the last who expresses his anger with the US through violence, whether it is anger about military campaigns, foreign policies or secular 'Hollywood' morality. Unless Christians show them something different – the Gospel message shared with love and action – Muslims from the outside looking in will continue to believe what they see and what they are taught in anti-Western mosques.

**PRAY > For wisdom for leaders as they deal with the aftermath of the shooting > For the US Church to speak and act in a godly manner > For immigrant Muslims to encounter loving Christians**

## HILLARY CLINTON IN HISTORIC WIN



senator and former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton is 'well-known'.

Many younger, female voters described her as "old news", "just old", "stiff" or "just a regular politician" and said that she's "been around too long" and that she "doesn't connect with us". Hillary Clinton may outperform Donald Trump in opinion polls among women, but she still might not get her chance behind the famous Oval Office desk (ironically donated to the US in 1880 by Queen Victoria, a strong female leader).

### Clinton vs. Trump

A recent article in *Al Jazeera* compared the different approaches used by Clinton and Trump thus far: "In the public mind, the contrast can't be starker between the packaged Clinton and the unrestrained Republican nominee Donald Trump. She won the Democratic nomination by mastering the rules of the game; he won the Republican nomination by refusing to play by the traditional rules of the game. Come November, Clinton could still lose the general elections even though she's running against a populist candidate with 'no policy knowledge or workable proposals', who managed to alienate so many Latinos, Muslims and African Americans."

A key issue that has come to the fore during the Democratic primaries has been Hillary Clinton's failure to inspire or gain the trust of important segments of voters. Two major scandals have dogged her campaign: the contents of her Wall Street speeches, and the use of a private, unsecured email for transmitting secret/confidential emails (for which she could still be indicted). Issues of her integrity and honesty have been highlighted by many voters as a deep concern, but these concerns may be overcome by greater

Regardless of party persuasion, Hillary Clinton's recent victory is historic: she became the first female presidential nominee of a major political party [in the US]. It also brings her another step closer to the ultimate goal of US president, which would make her the first woman head of state in America's 238-year history. The impact of the moment was not lost on the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee who sent out the following message on Twitter: "To every little girl who dreams big: yes, you can be anything you want—even president. Tonight is for you." But it's still a long road to the presidency, and although she is closer than her previous bid in 2008, there are many who doubt whether she can clinch it. (*CNN*)

### Mixed feelings

Despite Clinton's historic win of the Democratic nomination (still to be officially confirmed at the upcoming convention), there was a decided lack of celebration among many voters, especially younger women. This lack of excitement may be attributed the fact that Clinton has been around for so long – the possibility of the first female president was discussed way back in January 2007, when Clinton first declared her candidacy for the White House. As a former first lady, former

# NEWS HEADLINES



**Islamic State** fighters withdrew from frontlines with Syrian rebel forces north of Aleppo as they mounted a counter attack against the jihadist group near the Turkish border, an opposition source and monitoring group said. The sudden withdrawal from villages around the rebel-held town of Marea points to the pressure Islamic State is feeling from offensives being waged by other enemies further east.



**Al-Qaeda** leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, in an online audio message, pledged allegiance to the new head of the Afghan Taliban, who was appointed last month after his predecessor was killed in a US drone strike.



**Russia** is building an army base near its border with Ukraine, the latest in a chain of new military sites along what the Kremlin sees as its frontline in a growing confrontation with NATO. While there have been no clashes between the former Cold War rivals, Russia is building up forces on its western frontiers at a time when the NATO alliance is staging major military exercises and increasing deployments on its eastern flank.

fears of Donald Trump becoming president. Some voters have revealed that, for the first time, they may not vote at all in the November presidential election.

If Hillary Clinton hopes to win the White House, she will have to demonstrate how 'fairness, inclusion and diplomacy' can beat Donald Trump's politics of force and exclusion, and why 'building bridges' with the world is better than 'walling America in'.

## FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

According to a new survey by the *Barna* group, Donald Trump is viewed unfavourably by 67 percent of registered evangelical voters, while Hillary Clinton is viewed unfavourably by 81 percent. Therefore Christians may find themselves needing to decide between the 'lesser of two evils'.

So where do the two candidates stand on issues of particular concern to Christians?

Regarding abortion, Clinton believes that "politicians have no business interfering with woman's personal health decisions", and says that she'll "stand up for legal abortion". Trump says he is "pro-life" and that "public funding of abortion providers is an insult to people of

conscience".

Regarding gun control, Trump says that if he becomes president, "the right of the American people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed upon", while Clinton proposes stricter gun control laws.

Finally, with regard to immigration (particularly immigration of Latin Americans), Clinton want to create a "pathway to citizenship" that would allow millions of illegal immigrant workers to make themselves known to authorities. Trump, on the other hand, has infamously said that he wants to "build a wall" between the US and Mexico.

Clearly, the choice for American voters is not going to be easy. The Democratic nomination win by Hillary Clinton may be historic, but the final November results are going to prove to be even more so, regardless of which of the two eventually claims victory.

**PRAY > For God to direct Hillary Clinton's leadership > For His will to prevail in the November elections > For US missionaries impacted by political changes at home**

## SOUTH AFRICA FACING A TERROR THREAT?



**S**outh Africa does not face any imminent threat of a terror attack, the government has said, after both the United States and United Kingdom released alerts that South Africa could suffer an IS [Islamic State]-related attack during the month of Ramadan. David Mahlobo, state security minister, said in a statement that there was "no immediate danger posed by the alert [and that they have] liaised with the Americans on the concerns they have and these engagements will continue as part of the ongoing work." Mahlobo's statement comes after the UK issued a statement, cautioning its citizens of possible attacks on shopping malls in the country. (*Aljazeera*)

### The situation in South Africa

The recent warnings by the US government came after a call by Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi for his followers and supporters to carry out terror attacks around the world during the month of Ramadan. As a

result, there are increased fears about the possibility of IS militants operating in South Africa, and more questions about whether the country faces any real danger.

Naeem Jeenah, director of the *Africa Middle East Centre* (AMEC) in Johannesburg, said that the US issues such alerts "when they [want] to send a certain message to the South African government, because they are seen as too soft on terrorism". Jeenah referred to a similar case in September 2015 when the US embassy issued a terrorist threat warning after the South African government allowed citizens who had travelled to Raqqa (in Syria) to return home without scrutiny.

Other noted analysts such as Anton du Plessis, executive director of the *Institute of Security Studies* (ISS) in Johannesburg, say that although South Africa is not considered a target for IS, "warnings ought to be taken seriously".

According to an article published by the *Mail & Guardian* on 4 February 2015, South Africa is seen by terrorist organisations as an attractive base from which to raise funding, due to the 'lawlessness' of the country, a corrupt government structure and a wide range of financing methods that can easily be used without suspicion. However, the article quotes Bernard

## FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

### INcontext Website:

[www.incontextministries.org](http://www.incontextministries.org)

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If you have any questions or comments relating to the articles in this publication or on the website, please feel free to contact us at any time.



## INcontext Team Details

### Contact:

#### General - Mike:

Mobile - 0828657380

[mike@incontextministries.org](mailto:mike@incontextministries.org)

#### AWIM - Andrew:

[andrew@incontextministries.org](mailto:andrew@incontextministries.org)

#### Communication - Cheryllyn:

[cheryllyn@incontextministries.org](mailto:cheryllyn@incontextministries.org)

#### Seminars - Eric:

[eric@incontextministries.org](mailto:eric@incontextministries.org)

#### Events - Hanlie:

[hanlie@incontextministries.org](mailto:hanlie@incontextministries.org)

#### Prayer - Donnelly:

[donnelly@incontextministries.org](mailto:donnelly@incontextministries.org)

#### Projects - Gustav:

[gustav@incontextministries.org](mailto:gustav@incontextministries.org)

#### Resources / Travel - Stefan:

[stefan@incontextministries.org](mailto:stefan@incontextministries.org)



## INcontext Banking Details

### SOUTH AFRICA

Bank: ABSA

Name: Incontext

Cheque acc no: 4078983933

Branch: Durbanville (632 005)

### UNITED STATES

Account Name: M Burnard

Bank: BMO Harris Bank

Account number:

4818649309

Routing Number:

071025661

Hotz, head of the *Werksmans Business Crimes & Investigations Practice*, as saying that "the ability of terrorist groups to set up networks [in SA] that provide funding and a venue to co-ordinate activities elsewhere could be protecting South Africa from terrorist attacks."

### *In the big picture*

According to the latest *Global Terrorism Index* (GTI, published in 2015 by the *Institute for Economics and Peace*), South Africa was ranked 38<sup>th</sup> out of 123 countries that are affected by terror attacks. The *Global Peace Index* (GPI), published by the same organisation, places South Africa at number 136 out of 162 countries (in this report, Syria is at the bottom of the list, while Iceland is classified as the most peaceful). Meanwhile, the *Corruption Perception Index* (CPI, published by *Transparency International*), ranks South Africa as number 61 out of 168 countries listed from least to most corrupt. In comparison, the US ranked 35<sup>th</sup> on the GTI, 94<sup>th</sup> on the GPI and 16<sup>th</sup> on the CPI.

Thus it would seem as if South Africa may face some threat of terror attacks, that it is not a very peaceful country, and that there is a measure of corruption.

### *Reports and rumours*

Reports such as these leave many South Africans in a state of fear and suspicion, as can be seen in the responses to the recent fire that destroyed the "Jesus Dome" church in Durban. Allegations were quickly made about the fire being caused by Islamic terrorists, and that it confirmed the warning from the US embassy, but eyewitness reports debunked these allegations. Investigations are still ongoing at present, but the working theory is that the fire was caused by an electrical fault.

These reported threats are also likely to reawaken fears that arose in February 2015, when alarmist emails about IS financiers buying up farms in Petrusville (a small farming community in the middle of the country) started circulating ([click here](#) to read the report). The information in the email was debunked (what started as misinformation became a hoax), but the damage was already done. Fears and suspicions about Muslims in the country spread rapidly, and rumours became rife.

### *FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE*

Is South Africa a target for Islamic terror attacks? In short, yes, this is possible. The Islamic State clearly desires to extend its reach and influence around the world, and South Africa is not immune from this reality. But this is also true for almost every country in the world. As the extremist group continues to lose ground in Iraq and Syria, it is expected that they will focus their attentions elsewhere, and fear is still being used as their primary weapon.

Jesus said that the defining characteristic of His followers should be love. Giving in to fears can 'disarm' this love – fear goes hand-in-hand with doubt and suspicion, and can ultimately lead to hatred. This is what Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi would want: for Christians to hate Muslims in a way that would motivate terrorists to attack. Living in a state of fear and suspicion makes every Muslim a possible threat and enemy, and this is entirely counter-productive to any efforts to live as salt and light among people who do not know the Truth found in Jesus Christ.

**PRAY > For South African Christians to remain calm and clear-headed > For God to thwart any evil plans intended for South Africa**

## KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION



### **PROJECT REFUGE** *Supporting relief efforts among refugees*

Project Refuge supports various initiatives that focus on refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. The project mainly supports Christian workers who are actively working among refugees, as well as making it possible for these workers to provide much-needed aid such as food, clothing and bedding.

These Christian workers are from various countries (Korea, China, Kurdistan, Syria, Lebanon, Brazil and Egypt) but they all have one thing in common: despite being over-worked and under-resourced, they are completely committed to bringing relief and restoring dignity.

We invite you to help us support these Christian workers who are showing Christ's love and compassion to refugees..

**To support this project, please make use of the INcontext bank details and use Refuge together with your email address (as much as possible of it) as reference.**

*If you have any questions about this project, please contact our project department: [gustav@incontextministries.org](mailto:gustav@incontextministries.org)*