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Herrnhuter Mission *aktuell*

Nachrichten der Herrnhuter Missionshilfe

Ausgabe 2026-20 vom 29. Oktober 2026

Star Mountain: The fear remains

Since 9 October 2026, the Star Mountain Rehabilitation Centre (SMRC), located between Ramallah and Birzeit, has no longer been a truly safe place for many people. On that day, Jewish settlers forced their way onto the centre's grounds and marched across the campus. In the process, a greenhouse was damaged. For the staff, children and young people, the SMRC had previously been a safe haven. Even when violence occurs elsewhere, here at this Christian organisation – which selflessly cares for vulnerable groups such as children with intellectual disabilities – people feel safe. For some, that sense of security is now in doubt. However, the staff, children and young people are carrying on with their daily lives and refusing to let fear hold them back. Given the situation, this is truly admirable. There is currently hope that this incident will remain a one-off and that the security measures put in place will prove effective. These include improved security around the centre's grounds.

International reaction to the incident on Star Mountain

The violent intrusion by Jewish settlers on 9 October 2026 onto the grounds of the Star Mountain Rehabilitation Centre (SMRC) has caused a major international outcry. The Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Dr Imad Haddad, wrote: "This is illegal, violent trespassing and destruction of property that could escalate even further at any time. The physical damage currently caused to the facility is compounded by the severe psychological trauma suffered by those who attend and work at the centre". Read the full letter here. The incident was also viewed with the utmost concern in Germany. The President of the Evangelical Regional Church of Westphalia, Dr Adelheid Ruck-Schröder, wrote a letter of

solidarity to Star Mountain to draw attention to the situation: “My thoughts and prayers are with the young people who receive support at Star Mountain, with their parents, with the carers and staff, and of course with you, who bear responsibility for the centre’s work. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to you and all the employees of Star Mountain for carrying out such important and valuable work for the development of these young people every single day, despite the immense challenges you face. In an exemplary way, you are living out the calling that Christ has given us.” The full letter can be found here. Dr Jørgen Bøytler, Moravian Unity General Secretary, informed the provinces and institutions of the worldwide Moravian Church about the incident and asked for prayers and financial support.

Prayer for peace on Star Mountain following the incident

Under the patronage of Dr Imad Haddad, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and Munther Isaac, the Lutheran pastor in Ramallah, an ecumenical prayer for peace took place at the Star Mountain Rehabilitation Centre (SMRC) on 24 October 2026. The peace prayer was attended by representatives of Christian churches and local organisations, as well as national and community figures, alongside the centre’s staff and a number of supporters. The prayer service was a response to the incident involving Jewish settlers who had unlawfully entered the premises on 9 October 2026. Solidarity within the local Christian ecumenical community is a vital factor for the Christian presence in the region. Herrnhuter Missionshilfe and the Star Mountain Association (Sternbergverein) would like to thank Imad Haddad for this powerful Christian gesture.

Raid on the Atsikana Walani Technical College (AWTC) in Malawi

During the night to Monday 12 October 2026, the Atsikana Walani Technical College (AWTC) in Malawi was the target of an armed raid. Around 15 men forced their way onto the guarded premises, overpowered the security staff and gained access to the female students’ dormitories. Among the items stolen were mobile phones, money, clothing and bicycles. The solar-powered water pump, as well as several doors and windows, were also damaged. Fortunately, the female students

were not physically harmed and no one was seriously injured. In view of the ongoing drought and high food prices, social hardship is growing in Malawi, and with it concerns about rising crime. To improve security at the college as quickly as possible, plans are now in place to raise the perimeter wall, install additional security lighting and recruit two further security guards. Psychological support for the students is also to be stepped up. The college must continue to be a safe place where young women can learn and shape their futures. We welcome any support for these additional security measures.

Improved water supply at the VTC in Songea

Clean water is essential for good learning conditions and good health. However, at the VTC (Vocational Training Center) in Songea, Tanzania, the water supply had not always been reliable up until now. Time and again, pupils had to interrupt their lessons to fetch water. With the support of Herrnhuter Missionshilfe, the water supply at the VTC has now been improved. A solar-powered water pump now ensures a reliable and sustainable water supply on the premises. This makes everyday school life easier, improves hygiene standards and ensures that the young people can concentrate better on their training. The project was funded by Herrnhuter Missionshilfe and supported by the partner organisation Tanzania Mwangaza (TAM). The improved water supply makes an important contribution to a healthy learning environment and creates better conditions for successful vocational training.

Albania: Call for prayer for peace and hope

Albania has been experiencing nationwide demonstrations and rising tensions for several days. On 17 October 2026, the situation escalated when protests led to violent clashes between demonstrators and the security forces. These events are causing fear and uncertainty amongst many people in the country. Dena Fortuzi, a minister of the Moravian Church in Albania, is also watching these developments with great concern. The current events remind her of the difficult years of upheaval in the late 1990s. “It breaks my heart to see young people on the streets and to witness so much anger and pain around me,” she writes. She is asking the international community of the Moravian Church to pray for the people of Albania: for the young people, the injured, the families and all those living in fear at this time. Her hope is that the violence will end, that people will find

protection and hope, and that Albania can embark on a peaceful path towards the future. More here.

The Moravian Church Cuba Music Academy in Santa Clara is growing

On 22 October 2026, the Moravian Church Cuba in Santa Clara posted on Facebook: “We thank God, our Father, for giving us a sphere of work where art and faith come together to bring us life and hope. The Moravian Church Music Academy in Santa Clara, founded a year ago through the grace of Jesus Christ, is growing ever more and bearing fruit that glorifies our heavenly Father. The Music Academy is an excellent place to share knowledge, learn perseverance, develop talents and enjoy fellowship. Many thanks to the teachers who teach with such care and dedication. Many thanks to the teenagers and young adults for their courage and diligence. And thank God that He gives us more than we deserve and shows us that we do not need much to survive.” Pictures here.

Danish National Church calls on congregations to reach out

A post by the Brødremenighedens Danske Mission BDM in Christiansfeld, Denmark, mentions that the congregations of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran State Church are to focus more on mission in accordance with a new church law. At a seminar in Haderslev on 21 October 2026, entitled Mission Possible?, Bishop Marianne Christiansen of the Diocesan Committee for Mission – herself a former missionary – remarked: “Mission is the Church’s extroversion. In the past, the missionary was a man in a pith helmet who had been sent out to convert the heathens to the Christian faith. Today, mission takes place wherever people meet – here in Denmark and on every continent.” The churches must move away from their introversion, from their tendency to focus primarily on themselves. Sunday services, too, must change completely. More here.

Surinamese organisations share their values and standards

Wi Tru Sranan – Stichting voor nationale eenheid, waarden en normen is an organisation in Suriname that works towards a united Surinamese society through various initiatives and media. The campaign Surinamese organisations share their values and standards with one another will run in 2026/27. The call for participation stated: “Many Surinamese organisations, both in Suriname and in the diaspora, contribute to strengthening our nation’s values and standards by basing their actions on these values and standards.” Wi Tru Sranan would like to thank the participating organisations for their contribution to a virtual exhibition on corporate values. Over the next 20 weeks, these three organisations will be presenting their values and standards: 1.) *Qualogy Caribbean* (an IT company), 2.) *Anton de Kom University Suriname*, 3.) *Stichting Onderwijs der Evangelische Broedergemeente Suriname*. See also here.

Three news items from Suriname

- On 20 October 2026, members of the Chinese community in Suriname, in particular, marked the 173rd anniversary of the start of Chinese immigration to Suriname. See here.
- On 21 October 2026, an information session on syphilis took place at the health centre in Goejaba, a village on the upper reaches of the Suriname River in the Sipaliwini district. Such events form part of the range of services provided by the Medische Zending in Suriname, which places great emphasis on prevention and health education. A photo here.
- Good care for the elderly requires more than just a building. Older people need a safe and liveable environment, good care and as much attention as possible. At Huize Albertine, run by the Moravian Church in Paramaribo, Suriname, care, faith and social interaction come together. Church services are held weekly, and residents can receive pastoral care within the home. A photo here.

Suriname: Paediatric Outreach Programme launched with many participants

On 15 October 2026, a press conference held in Aporea, Suriname, marked the launch of the national Pediatric Outreach Programme. This large village lies deep within the tropical rainforest on the Courantyne River, on the Surinamese-Guyanese border. In addition to

Medische Zending – Primary Health Care, three further partners are collaborating on this pioneering paediatric healthcare programme: the Paramaribo Academic Hospital (AZP), Total Energies Exploration & Production Suriname (TEPSR) and the Apache Oil Corporation Suriname (APA). The latter partners are acting as financial backers. The programme aims to improve access to specialist paediatric care in remote areas of Suriname. The hospital contributes excellent medical expertise and, where necessary, inpatient care for the children to the programme. The Medische Zending plays a crucial role as the local partner in the rainforest villages. More here.

Two modern microscopes for use in the Surinamese interior

Founded in 1992 by Catholic Christians in the Netherlands, the *Catharina Comité Suriname* has set itself the goal of supporting hospital care in Suriname. This support has now benefited the two health clinics in Brownsweg and Brokopondo, located in Suriname's tropical rainforest and operated by the Medische Zending. On Facebook, the recipients wrote on October 6, 2026: "We received two binocular transmitted-light microscopes from our partner organization Catharina Comité Suriname. The microscopes will be used for our laboratory research. For us, these microscopes mean more than just two pieces of technical equipment. They mean that our staff can continue to do their work successfully and that people in inland communities can be helped because we are close to them." Pictures here.

Suriname: Experimenting with the "Bibliodrama" Worship Format

On Friday, October 23, 2026, a one-day event took place on the grounds of the Moravian Church Theological Seminary in Paramaribo, Suriname, to which the Stichting Onderweijs of the EBGS (School Foundation) had invited its teachers and other interested individuals. The seminar aimed to introduce a new format for devotions and worship services: bibliodrama. The story of the raising of the twelve-year-old daughter of Jairus, the synagogue ruler from Galilee, was dramatized through an improvised role-playing exercise. For

this purpose, a classroom at the Theological Seminary had been transformed into Jairus's home, with his dead daughter laid out on a bier. The seminar participants enthusiastically took part in the role-play; indeed, they truly experienced Jesus' power over death. Three videos here and here and here.

Three News Items from the "International Kindergarten & Shristi Academy"

- "The Sports Day at the International Kindergarten & Shristi Academy of the Moravian Church in Kathmandu, Nepal, on October 17, 2026, was a celebration. This was especially true of the dance performance by the stars from the 1st and 2nd grades!" That's what the school's Facebook pages said. A video of a small human pyramid can be found here and one of the taekwondo group here.
- Two days later, a post on Facebook read: "We congratulate Sahasrajit Bahadur Khatri on taking first place and Aadish Acharya on taking third place at the Himalaya Junior Chess Championship in the U6 age group! Your remarkable achievement at such a young age makes us proud. We wish you many more victories in the future! See here.
- As early as October 13, 2026, a post on Facebook read: "We are very proud to congratulate our talented 8th-grade student, Aahana Shah, on winning first place in the Inter-School Nepali Essay Competition 2026 in Bagmati Province. Keep up the great work!" See here.

Land Dispute in the Congregation of Elim Still Unresolved

Under the headline South Africa's Moravian Church at the Center of Land Disputes in the Western Cape, the broadcaster FRANCE 24 produced a five-minute report based on research conducted in the congregation of Elim, very close to the southern tip of South Africa. See here. In the report, several residents of Elim —whose families have lived in the historic village for centuries—are interviewed about what the Moravian Church needs to do to help the village develop further. The Moravian Church plays a pivotal role in the village's development because, since 1824—when missionary work began—it has been the largest landowner in the area (700 ha). The residents of the former mission stations pay a fee to the Moravian Church in South Africa (MCSA), which, in return,

maintains the infrastructure. However, the residents criticize the church for not reinvesting the funds it collects back into the village.

Indigenous members of the Moravian Church in the U.S. share their struggles

In the city of Banning, California, USA—which has a population of 30,000—there is the *Morongo Moravian Church*. Jessica Espinoza and Erica Rios, two mothers raising Indigenous daughters and sons, are members of this congregation. One of them lives on an Indigenous reservation, the *Morongo Reservation*, which was established in 1876; the other lives in an Indigenous household. Both women spoke out on Facebook on October 22, 2026. See here: "As mothers raising Indigenous daughters and sons, we carry both love and fear in our hearts every day, knowing that the world does not always protect our children as it should. Our children navigate a world that too often ignores the safety, dignity, and humanity of Indigenous peoples. This reality shapes our prayers, our parenting, and our hopes." The mothers are therefore actively involved in the National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Movement. They emphasize: "Every missing person is an entire world taken from their family."

PDF of the Newsletter

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