

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Biden: Hamas attack on Israel is 'sheer evil'

Hello, this is the Global News Podcast from the BBC World Service with reports and analysis from across the world. The latest news seven days a week. BBC World Service podcasts are supported by advertising. This is the Global News Podcast from the BBC World Service. I'm Alex Ritzen and in the early hours of Wednesday the 11th of October these are our main Joe Biden condemns a mass for its deadly attacks on Israelis including babies being killed. This is an act of sheer evil. More than 1000 civilians slaughtered. I just feel slaughtered in Israel. Israeli airstrikes are reducing much of Gaza to rubble while the blockade adds to the humanitarian crisis there. Look to the scale of destruction in the area and how the civilian homes were completely affected and some of them were completely destroyed. The Israeli military takes journalists to the scene of a massacre of civilians in a kibbutz. Also in this podcast evidence of an explosion at the time a Finnish undersea gas pipeline stopped working and the US cuts off aid to Niger one of the world's poorest countries after July's coup. Israel counts the United States as its closest ally and at the White House President Biden pledged America's full support in its war against the Palestinian militant group Hamas. He said the gunman who broke out of Gaza and into southern Israel on Saturday had committed a massacre. You know there are moments in this life and I mean this literally when the pure unadulterated evil is unleashed on this world. The people of Israel lived through one such moment this weekend. Bloody hands of the terrorist organization Hamas. A group who stated purpose for being is to kill Jews. More than 1000 civilians slaughtered in Israel. Among them at least 14 American citizens. President Biden also confirmed that US citizens were among an estimated 150 Israelis and foreigners being held hostage by Hamas in Gaza. He said he was ready to order extra US military forces to the region to act as a deterrent to any force thinking of taking advantage of the crisis. Mr Biden spoke after his third phone call in four days with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. We also discussed how democracies like Israel and the United States are stronger and more secure when we act according to the rule of law. Terrorists purposely target civilians. We uphold the laws of war. It matters. There's a difference. Let there be no doubt the United States has Israel's back. We will make sure that Jewish and democratic state of Israel can defend itself today, tomorrow, as we always have. We're with Israel. Let's make no mistake. More than 3000 people have now died in Israel and the Gaza Strip in a war with no end in sight. They include more than 1000 victims of the original Hamas-led assault, at least 1500 of the gunmen who carried out Saturday's assault, and more than 800 who died in Israel's attacks on Gaza since. Rockets were still being fired in both directions late into the night. Our correspondent in Jerusalem, John Donison, told me more about Tuesday's developments. Israel had promised its retaliation was only just beginning, and for a fourth day its air force has continued to pound Gaza overnight. They hit more than 200 targets. A lot of them in the Ramallah district, which is right in the center of Gaza City. I mean, whole streets there reduced to rubble. You've multi-story blocks burnt out or simply flattened. A lot of people have been just firing their neighborhoods just in a state of complete disrepair. You've got now close to 200,000 Palestinians in Gaza living in UN shelters or seeking shelter in UN schools. At the same time, there has been renewed intensification of rocket fire out of Gaza. Hamas issued a warning saying that they were going to fire out of Gaza at five o'clock towards the Israeli city of Ashkelon. Virtually on the dot, they did so, and you had a barrage after barrage of rockets heading towards that city in southern Israel. Yeah, we've been hearing from the Defense Minister who says the army is moving towards full scale offensive in Gaza. That's what he said. Yes, he said that he had released all the

restraints and that the army had regained control of that southern area around Gaza and that they were moving to full offense. He said that Hamas will regret this moment and Gaza will never return to what it was. So there has been growing speculation or expectation that some sort of ground operation

is coming and the Defense Minister seemed to be suggesting that was the case.

John Donison. The two million or so Palestinians now living under siege as they seek shelter from Israeli airstrikes are facing a humanitarian crisis. The small town of Khan Yunus in the south of the Gaza Strip is among those that have been targeted by Israeli airstrikes. Moshe El Farah lives there. People who were ordered by the Israeli army to leave the eastern province borders in the Gaza civilization hundreds of families, thousands of people moved. Some of them managed to find accommodations but many of them hundreds are on the streets and some of them seek shelter under buildings including this municipality building which has a little shopping area under it so the building came down on them. Our reporter in Gaza Rushdie Abu Alouf spent the day assessing the damage caused by Israeli airstrikes in the central commercial area of Gaza city where many people live.

People just warn us to leave this area because it seems the Israelis are going to target another building but very quickly if we can see the scale of destruction in this neighborhood it's called Rimal neighborhood. It's the economic hub for Gaza that has been completely targeted yesterday. Many buildings were destroyed behind me is 11-story building that was knocked down two

days ago but the destruction in this area it's been targeted last night they hit many government buildings along to the Hamas run authority but look to the scale of destruction in the area and how the civilian homes were completely affected and some of them were completely destroyed.

Rushdie Abu Alouf reporting from Gaza. Francesca Albanese the United Nations special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories says that Israel's action could have devastating consequences. Gaza was already under an unlawful blockade and the cutoff of any type of aid and the session services like medicines, food, electricity might lead to starvation and this must stop. Causing starvation is a crime against humanity it's extremely serious and it's already been denounced by a number of international experts and agencies. On Tuesday the Israeli army allowed journalists into the Kibbutz town of Kafar, Gaza where many families were killed in their homes by Hamas gunman. Our international editor Jeremy Bowen has been to the scene warning parts of this report are distressing. We've arrived at one of the frontline Kibbutzes here invited by the Israeli army at a time of a what's clearly a serious incident there are several hundred combat soldiers here a lot of vehicles and been firing over the border into Gaza. When you came, got in here, what did you see? Chaos. How difficult was the fighting? Can't imagine. Have you ever had to do anything like this before as a soldier?

Nothing like this.

Just had to take cover because there was an alarm with a rocket coming in and the nearest place was the home of a woman and her family whose bodies are still lying outside there now. You can smell decomposing flesh in the air the weather is hot the bodies of the dead Hamas gunman are still there some bloated and distended by decomposition already. The war is very close to here we're right on the border with Gaza and you can hear it the whole time a barrage, a shingham fire and in the midst of all of that the soldiers are trying to clear these houses not just pick up the dead but look as well for unexploded ordinance things that

could cause them injuries. I mean I'm surrounded here in this part of the Kibbutz by rubble by the remains of people's lives sofas that they would sit out in the evenings probably there's a sort of a rubber ring on a rack there which looks like kids probably played with wind chimes people lived here partly because of the quality of life you could get in the countryside and also an assurance that they believed in that Israel their government their army would keep them safe and in charge of all the men here is senior Israeli officer his major general Varouvan with him now I know that Israelis have suffered a great deal and are suffering there are 2.4 million people a few miles from here in Gaza including many civilians not connected with Hamas many of whom are being killed what do you say to that we are not terrorists we are soldiers and we are western country and we know and we crush the Hamas and we kill them all I hope so but we will steal human bin until our last death there's no sense in which you are suspending your obligations under the laws of war because of the extent of the emergency facing Israel we fight for our value and I know that we will be very aggressive but we keep our moral and our value we are Israeli we are Jewish and you know war it's a very difficult theater a lot of problem people that stay in the battlefield are suffered a lot you can see what happened in here but we come to kill the enemy not the civilians in their bed that report from Jeremy Bowen there's a particular agony for those who've lost people in the massacres of Saturday and those who still don't know Mike Jonathan Ziegler

his 75 year old mother Vivian Silver lived in Kibbutz Bieri close to the border with Gaza on Saturday morning Hamas Gunman swept in while Vivian was on the phone to her son Tim Franks spoke to Jonathan on the balcony of his small apartment in Tel Aviv we've been talking on the phone trying to understand what's going on until I heard over the phone a lot of gunshots outside her window so we decided to stop speaking so she won't be heard and we started corresponding through WhatsApp she was still joking with me because that's the kind of woman she was and then she wrote me that they're inside the house and that no more jokes hold each other messages of love and that was it she stopped being connected to WhatsApp at 11.07 Saturday morning you must have been frantic what did you try to do so I just waited then it started to sink in to process the fact that she's dead there's not much doing in those moments I was pretty shut down but as it continued to unfold frantic is an correct word I started talking to people trying to get information a lot of people reached out to me so I sunk in my phone to communicate with the world tell me a little bit about the sort of woman your mother is my mother was a peace worker she dedicated her life to peace and equality through organizations that she was a part of and ran also through volunteering through speaking out up until recently she would drive sick Palestinians from Gaza to Israeli hospitals I asked you about the sort of woman your mother is and you said my mother was you obviously do fear that you may not see her again yes you know I noticed that as well I think I corrected myself I moved from past tense to present tense it's just so very confusing and stressful although I am optimistic a country can't leave so many captive people elderly women children without getting them out I call on the Israeli government to use diplomacy and negotiate I understand it's not really a consensus here but I think that's the right way to go from where I'm seeing it seems like our infrastructure has collapsed in Israel if we're talking about the army's ability to react and defend the citizens or about information but it's pretty hurtful and frustrating you've painted a picture of your mother having spent her life dedicated to trying against all the odds as you put it for an end to the occupation if you were to think of the message she would want to

convey can you think of what it is it might be that she would want to say you know the only way to be safe is with peace it's just a vicious circle you know there's a term in Israel everybody uses we live on our sword you live on your sword you get cut

Jonathan Ziegler speaking to the BBC's Tim Franks now do you have questions about the crisis in the Middle East here's my colleague Jackie Leonard hello events in Israel and Gaza have prompted many of you to get in touch with your questions and we hope to answer as many of them as possible in a special global news podcast coming soon so what do you want to know some of the questions we've had so far how do we get here what's at the root of the conflict what are both sides saying what happens next ask us anything you want to know to help you understand as ever send us an email or voice message to globalpodcast at bbc.co.uk thank you

other stories now Finland has suggested damage to an undersea gas pipeline and a telecommunications

cable linking to Estonia was caused by external action the Norwegian seismological institute Norsar said it had detected a probable blast on Saturday night in the Baltic Sea near where the gas pipeline leak was discovered on Sunday Finland's prime minister is Pateri Orpo according to a preliminary assessment it is likely that the damage is the result of external activity

Mr Orpo said the same applied to a communication cable it's feared the damage could take months to repair so is this sabotage with more details here's Danny Aberhart

Finland's prime minister said that basically it's too early to say who or what caused the damage to the gas pipeline they know where the damage took place on the gas pipeline they don't know yet where the damage to the communication cable was Estonia's gas network also said that sabotage remains a possibility that's what they're looking at there are further investigations going on as we speak I think the fear is that Russia may be behind this this is a pipeline that goes over the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic it's Finland's only direct connection to the wider EU gas network and Finland used to get most of its gas from Russia via pipeline but Russia closed off the pipeline last year Russia wanted Finland to pay in rubles and Helsinki refused so since then Finland has relied on this gas pipeline which is relatively new and also from liquefied natural gas so at the moment it's having to rely exclusively on liquefied natural gas for all its gas it says that its supply is secure the big incident was last year in September when three of the four Nord Stream gas pipelines were taken out in explosions under the Baltic those were pipelines some of which already took gas from Russia to Germany some were about to but that really highlighted

just how vulnerable some key parts of Europe's energy infrastructure are since then countries across Europe have said they've heightened security but how do you in practice secure undersea gas pipelines it's extremely difficult Danny Aberhardt the Swedish capital Stockholm is banning all petrol and diesel vehicles from its centre the restrictions will cover 20 blocks in the heart of the city and come into force at the end of 2024 the zone might expand the following year Shemaye Opebor in Stockholm told me more well it all started in 2018 actually because the Swedish government then decided that it would be possible for local authorities to create so-called environmental zones to improve air quality and since then there was a study that was released in 2022 from the Karolinska Institute that said that children who grow up in roads in Stockholm that have high emissions have worse than average lung capacity when compared to other children from as early as six months old so this is really something quite serious when you're thinking about infants lungs being less effective and adults dying earlier so I think on the basis

of that study the city of Stockholm decided hey we need to do something they've decided to limit the dangerous emissions from petrol and diesel cars in the city and that's why they're introducing this new class three environmental zone in one part of the city centre and is the public on board with this there are some people that are really on board with it and there are others that are concerned what does it mean for people that already have cars citizens that live in Stockholm that have petrol or diesel cars not everybody can afford a completely electric vehicle so I think that that's where you're seeing a lot of tension and discussion at the moment there's also people that are wondering what does it actually mean who's allowed in who's not what are the exceptions to this there's been a lot of discussion with passengers and drivers who have disabled parking permits wondering if they'll still be allowed into the city centre because they need their cars there are other cities that also have heavy traffic in the city centres so I think that as they're now starting this rollout that will be at the end of December 2024 is when it's going to come into force and then in 2025 it will be increased I think that based on what kind of emissions are seen after that I would believe that there would be an interest to do it in other cities in Sweden.

The US has formally declared that the military in Niger has staged a coup declaration means more than five hundred million dollars in aid will be cut in July the army ousted President Mohammed Bazoum an ally of western nations in the fight against jihadist insurgents the state department said it would only restore assistance if the coup leaders ushered in a democratic government I asked that Africa regional editor Richard Hamilton what this means for Niger.

Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world and one of the poorest countries in Africa and it will undoubtedly be a lot poorer now so something like five hundred million dollars of American financial aid which was to go towards agriculture infrastructure education things like that that's all disappearing overnight so Niger many people think will go down the plug hole and what will this mean for the American military presence.

At the moment the United States has around a thousand American troops in Niger they've always used it as a stable hub in which to then help the combat against Islamist militants and they also have a drone base in Agadez in Niger so unlike the French who this very day have started their withdrawal the Americans for now at least say they're staying put but it's not inconceivable that they will also withdraw if America withholds this funds this presumably creates an opportunity for other players such as Russia that's the biggest concern militarily financially and at the moment Washington is saying there's no evidence that the Russian mercenary group Wagner is actively in Niger but it's not rocket science to work out that that's exactly what Moscow and Wagner want they want to make in rows into Niger and like other countries in the Sahel like Mali and Burkina Faso these military junters are looking towards Russia for help so it's pretty obvious that that's where Niger will go now. Richard Hamilton researchers say they've edited the DNA

of chickens to make them partially resistant to bird flu and that it might be possible to block the virus completely the results published in the journal Nature suggests that making further changes to the birds genes could produce fully immune chickens and also tackle problems that arise from high density farming our science correspondent Palagos reports bird flu is a major global threat with a devastating impact on both farmed and wild birds researchers have been trying to create varieties of chickens that are immune to the disease the team identified three genes involved and using a technique called gene editing made small changes to one of them

that mostly but not completely stopped the virus from reproducing in the chicken's bodies without any harmful effects to the birds that made the chickens partially resistant when given a high dose of the virus according to professor Wendy Barkley of Imperial College what this showed us is a proof of concept that we can move towards making chickens resistant to the virus but we're not there yet that we would need more robust edits to really shut down the virus replication the researchers found that when all three genes were switched off in an experiment with cells in a test tube the virus stopped multiplying altogether the next step is to reproduce the result in gene edited chickens which they're confident of doing in three years time Palagos now to a tale of adventure exploring misfortune endurance and recovery this is the story of 24 year old Australian extreme rower Tom Robinson who was attempting to break a world record and become the youngest person to row across the Pacific Ocean a huge wave capsized vessel on the final leg Nula McGovern picks up the story just as help arrives a bit after daybreak the next morning what went through his mind during the 14 hours that he was left clinging naked to his handmade rowing boat it's a long time a lot of things went through my mind I think first it was just the initial shock of oh my god this worst nightmare situation that you think about on and off for the whole journey has actually happened and then you climb on top of the boat and everything seems

really really awful you're wondering if you're going to survive and then you start to have a glimmer of hope you just got to hold on to it and you can't let the negative thoughts come in and so I was setting myself goals for every few hours what was going to happen next and then I told myself that by the time the sun came up hopefully I would see a ship and I did so it was this huge sense of relief that help had arrived and that was the cruise ship that was the cruise ship yes I was in the nude during all this because I often row with our clothes why and to stop chafe the less clothing you've got on the better so when you're rowing with clothes on and there's a bit of a sea going then you're constantly getting splashed with water and waves and that leaves salt all over your skin and then when you've got clothes on that really traps the salt onto your skin and the skin starts to rub and then it gets raw and it really is very painful so when I saw the ship I assumed it was a container vessel which I thought well that's good they'll only be 15 or 20 crew on board and then as a ship got closer I realized it was a cruise ship and so there were literally hundreds or thousands of people lining the decks with cameras and binoculars oh it's kind of modesty

go out the window obviously at that case because it's a life or death situation but did it give you any pause at the fact you weren't wearing any clothes in front of thousands of people it did more than it should have the unfortunate thing was that it was a very cold night it was very uncomfortable for me you can see in the footage of me being rescued I'm trying to cover up as best I can they threw down a rope ladder and I scrambled up the rope ladder and there was people watching this

whole rescue effort really hundreds of people lining the decks with their cameras how do you feel when you think about that moment it's all still very new and strange but that sort of image in my mind of the boat being turned upside down so violently and so quickly that's a reoccurring image in my mind and it is still quite frightening and it's all very strange and quite scary I've been back home in Brisbane for almost 24 hours now what are you doing I just had dinner with the family so nice to just be with the family it's quite a lot to process huh hmm a hell of a lot to process I think this might be too early to ask you Tom but do you think you'd try it again I want to say no

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but perhaps I will I'm really not sure yet there's a small chance that my vessel may wash up on a beach in Australia in a few months time and so if that did happen and it was still in one piece which I think it should be then then it would be tempting to to try again definitely I had a dream like that once uh 24 year old Australian rower Tom Robinson speaking to Nuala McGovern

and that's all from us for now but there'll be a new edition of the global news podcast later if you want to comment on this podcast or the topics covered in it you can send us an email the address is globalpodcast at bbc.co.uk you can also find us on x formally known as twitter at global news pod this edition was mixed by Holly Palmer and the producer was Emma Joseph the editor

is Karen Martin I'm Alex Ritzen until next time goodbye