

## [Transcript] Global News Podcast / Biden seeks 'vital' war aid for Israel and Ukraine

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This is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service.

I'm Robin Brandt and at 13 hours GMT on the 20th of October, these are our main stories.

As we record this podcast, President Biden is due to make an urgent budget request to Congress for billions of dollars in military support for Israel and Ukraine. The UN Secretary-General has visited the Rafa crossing from Egypt to Gaza and called for aid trucks to be allowed into the Palestinian territory as soon as possible. He described this as the difference between life and death for those suffering the effects of Israel's blockade. And fears are growing of the conflict spreading as Israel evacuates an entire city near its border with Lebanon and continues its deadly raids in the occupied West Bank. Also in this podcast. Other countries, the politicians and their partners get caught in embarrassing situations. Italy from the ancient Romans through to Silvio Berlusconi. It's always a bit more over the top. Italy's Prime Minister says she is separating from her long-term partner after comments he made in a TV studio. Now, as we record this podcast, President Biden is due to make an urgent budget request to Congress for billions of dollars in new military support for Israel and Ukraine. He gave details of the package in a televised address from the Oval Office on Thursday night. I'm going to send to Congress an urgent budget request to fund America's national security needs to support our critical partners, including Israel and Ukraine is a smart investment that's going to pay dividends for American security for generations. Help us keep American troops out of harm's way. Help us build a world that is safer, more peaceful, more prosperous for our children and grandchildren. This is only the beginning of the process, though. That requires support from the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Now, chaos in the latter, which is crippled by infighting as it tries to choose a new speaker, its most senior figure, could prove to be a major hurdle. Our North America editor Sarah Smith outlined the challenge that's facing the President. It's easier in the Senate where actually there is broad bipartisan support for sending money to both Israel and Ukraine. It's in the House of Representatives where on the right people don't want to send so much cash to Ukraine anymore. On the left, there's actually some suspicion and some reticence about sending too much money to Israel, and a sense that Joe Biden and the American administration are tying themselves too closely to Israel's side in this conflict. So these are political problems he has to weave his way through, and that's why a sincere and heartfelt case was made from the Oval Office to the American people that this is the right thing to do and the sensible thing to do for them, hoping that that can override the political problems that he has. Of course, it remains to be seen whether or not it will work. Well, did the President look convincing? Because part of his problem politically has been, hasn't it, that he hasn't sort of, you don't get that sense with him that he is as vigorous as American presidents usually are, to put it bluntly. Did the address, does the general demeanor of Joe Biden,

the fact that he went to Israel to what was effectively a war zone, does all of that count for him, do you think? Yeah, he was able to say in this speech, not only had he been in Israel the day before, the first American president to go there when it's in a state of war, but also talked about the trip he made to Ukraine earlier this year, when he stood in Kiev beside President Zelensky after a long and potentially dangerous trip there. So he sounded as though he is a man striding the world stage, taking his case about what he believes is at stake here to the very heart of these conflicts. We've had a reminder as well of the simple fact that America's military power is still pretty huge, haven't we overnight? Tell us what you can about the interception of this missile and the sense among Americans, particularly in the Pentagon, about the ability of the United States still to project power. Yeah, so what we know is that a US Navy warship in the northern Red Sea shot down three cruise missiles and also several drones that had been launched from Yemen, and the Pentagon said they might have been heading towards Israel,

they didn't exactly know, but they were heading in that direction. The US have deliberately stationed warships in the region after the Hamas attack on Israel as a deterrent. They are there to warn countries, particularly Iran, anybody else in the region who might want to get involved in this conflict, that the US is there and ready to take action if anybody has any ideas about widening the battlefield here. So in many ways taking this kind of action is able to project the military presence that the US has, and that's no accident.

Sarah Smith in Washington DC speaking to my colleague Justin Webb. Now by the time we recorded this podcast some people had hoped that aid would have begun entering Integaza from Egypt through the crucial RAFA crossing point, but so far that's not the case. Hundreds of trucks were still backed up loaded with crucial supplies of food, water and medicine for the two million people in Gaza who are increasingly desperate. Also at that key border point on the southern tip between Gaza and Egypt was the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. Behind these walls we have two million people that is suffering enormously. On this side we have seen so many trucks loaded with water, with fuel, with medicines, with food. So these trucks are not just trucks, they are a lifeline. They are the difference between life and death for so many people in Gaza. And to see them stuck here makes me be very clear. What we need is to make them move.

I just to remind you it was almost two weeks ago that Hamas launched a wave of assaults against people in southern Israel, killing at least 1,400 Israelis. Bodies are still being recovered. Israel responded to that by declaring a siege of Gaza where Hamas is based and launched a military operation against the area which is expected to lead to a ground invasion imminently. Hamas officials say around 4,000 people in Gaza have now lost their lives. Our correspondent Andrew Harding is making his way to Gaza from the Egypt side of the border. We've just arrived here

in Egypt close to the border with Gaza with a consignment of humanitarian aid, medical aid, from Jordan that's just been flown in on a cargo plane. We're about 45-50 kilometres from the Egyptian border with Gaza. This consignment will join all the other international humanitarian aid that is now waiting to get into Gaza for the people there so desperate for outside help.

This is going to be just the start of a very long, very complicated international humanitarian mission with plenty of threats ahead security-wise. The Israelis are still bombing south of Gaza, close to the border. The Israelis themselves are very concerned that this humanitarian corridor

could be used by their enemies Hamas to smuggle in arms, weapons and then there's the real danger

that at any moment all this could stop because the Israeli ground offensive into Gaza might begin.

Andrew Harding reporting from Egypt. While as things stand it appears that Egypt has opened its part of the border crossing but the Palestinian side remains closed. We got an update from our reporter Abdelbasseh Hassan from BBC Arabic who's based in the Egyptian capital Cairo.

Even after the distance between the two gates which is like some 600 meters, the square meters has been destroyed by the airstrikes over the weeks has been bathed recently or this morning and rebirth.

Unfortunately the high hopes of the morning faded and no change. The stealth, the tracks, lures and the huge amount of supplies waiting to come into Gaza are not expectedly at least in the foreseeable hours today to enter Gaza for the reasons that and according to Geteris the absence of ceasefire

is therefore he asked immediately to have an immediate what he called humanitarian ceasefire and the question about who is going to receive the AIDS especially after Israel

conditioned that it shouldn't go to Hamas. So Abdelbasseh can I just check so it's your

understanding based on what Antonio Guterres said in the last two hours that it's an absence of a ceasefire on the Israeli side that is preventing the border from opening and preventing the aid

from going across. He openly called for during the presser he said we'd like to have a humanitarian

ceasefire this is one thing and he asked for we have to have as many as we can of authorized

tracks to go in and this should be a immediate land. He also said that there are conditions

which is to are still practically hindering the aid from coming into Gaza as planned.

Abdelbasseh Hassan reporting well let's go now to the south of Israel where our chief international

correspondent least to set is reporting from. She told me about the expected ground offensive.

Well of course everyone is waiting most of all the people of the Gaza strip already under

non-stop bombardment night and day when that ground incursion starts because the

military's escalation will be much much worse than they're already living through now in night

marriage conditions. When the Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu went to the border

yesterday with the defense minister Joav Galant he said that you can see he told the forces you

can see Gaza from here and you can you can see it on the horizon but you will soon see inside Gaza.

Now whether that is just a way to maintain morale a state of readiness because the you can't

any military commander will tell you it's not good to keep that large number hundreds of thousands

of troops waiting on a border waiting for a highly risky operation to start that you should do it as

soon as possible but we also heard from the Israeli defense forces in the past hour and they say

that they are now bombing that the air force is in action across the Gaza strip in a way it hasn't

been for the past a decade and saying they are preparing for the next phase so what can we read

into that they must be trying to strike and destroy as much of Hamas's infrastructure their

communications network the homes of Hamas leaders and their families the Hamas high command

political

leaders to destroy as much as possible cause as much damage and as much deaths they made it

clear

they want to kill everyone belonging to Hamas before they go in on the ground and we know that

about a week ago they said they did actually make an incursion a very limited raid into Gaza to try to

get more information about the location of the hostages to locate some Hamas cells they may be

doing more than is obvious but they they're starting to push back against everyone asking them

when

is it going to start in fact an idea of spokesman a few days ago said you're all talking about it but we might do something different and that's true they are make changing their assessments with every day their assessment of the battlefield least you said reporting from the south of Israel in the north of the country there is stark evidence of the heightened tension and fears of a serious escalation at the border with Lebanon that disputed border is a major flashpoint where the militant group Hezbollah is involved in almost daily fire and exchanges with Israel's military Israel has begun to evacuate thousands of people from the city of Kiryat Shemona as rocket attacks from across the border continue Hugo Bocega spoke to us from Beirut the news that the Israeli authorities are evacuating Kiryat Shemona I think shows how tense the situation is this is in a part of the region that has been heavily targeted by those militants here in Lebanon and so I think the concern here is that this could become another front in this conflict and I think to understand what's happening here you need to understand you know the role that Iran plays because I think any kind of decision that's going to be made in terms of how Hezbollah is going to act will probably be taken in Iran Iran is Hezbollah's main supporter it is part of the resistance front if you like which is an alliance of forces that Iran backs here in the region Hezbollah here in Lebanon but also groups in Syria in Iraq in Yemen but Hezbollah is the main force in this alliance and the Israeli authorities have been warning Iran and also Hezbollah that any kind of escalation of violence would lead to a very harsh Israeli response and that obviously means that Hezbollah would be you know suffering a massive blow and that would obviously harm Iran's

interests in the region so I think all those factors are being considered behind the scenes when we discuss what Hezbollah is going to do Hugo Bachege reporting from Lebanon as Israeli soldiers prepared to move into Gaza Israeli cabinet ministers have been visiting the scenes of some of the massacres carried out by Hamas almost two weeks ago the BBC was given access to one of those visits with Nia Bakat who went to Kibbutz Kaffar Azar where women and children were among the 50 Israelis who were murdered Hamas rockets are still being fired towards Israel while we wait as a checkpoint near the border most intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome the intense airstrikes haven't silenced Hamas

we joined an Israeli cabinet minister on a visit to one of the scenes of this month's massacre his pistol an armored van just a precaution along the way we passed convoys of military vehicles all these trucks going passing us now they will be involved in a major offensive I didn't say that I'm not going to say what they're going to do I said that they have a green light to do and when whenever they want and how long will it take as long as it takes

Nia Bakat is one of the first ministers to come to see for himself the carnage and devastation Kibbutz Kaffar Azar is where more than 50 Israelis were murdered families women and children others taken hostage

this is just walking through this house which is just stained with blood on the floor just this one home several family members were killed some were taken hostage they don't know how many over here over here there's a a Hamas headband they've left you've had a look around here for the first time what's your feelings I've been to war this is not war this is hell I just can't think of what these people went through the hell they went through what's going to happen to Hamas now

Hamas will be wiped out from from the face of the world how with force with force so Israeli troops will be going in there soon with force I said force can't do you understand why do you understand why Israel has to finish this war this is one of the Israeli Kibbutz's closest to Gaza you can see it the buildings in the distance they're just a few kilometers away you can also hear drones up above occasionally the sound of artillery is really artillery going out and it is clear they are preparing for war in the distance you can see in to Gaza just beyond the gates which Hamas broke through to bring their mayhem and murder the Israeli forces massing nearby are now just awaiting the order to enter Jonathan Beale reporting Udi Goren is an Israeli man whose cousin was one of about 200 people kidnapped by Hamas nearly two weeks ago Israel says it believes most of them are still alive despite the cause for revenge by many he is calling for a de-escalation of the crisis and he told my colleague James Coppinal why it's a horrible situation because aside from the 200 people who have been kidnapped there are also another 100 to 200 that are missing and we don't currently know what what happened to them and we would not know until the fighting ends and right now Tal is missing even though his phone was last traced to Gaza so many in Israel seem to be rallying behind the government that is calling for Hamas to be wiped out calling for a ground incursion into Gaza as soon as possible I understand that that's not your thought it's absolutely not my thought for several reasons first of all the consequences going into a ground assault means that the Israeli government has given up hope on the hostages and the the risk that this would put on their lives that are already at risk constant risk is immense we have no clue what would Hamas do if the ground incursion takes place and I wish that when Prime Minister Sunak who is very kind to come and show his standing with Israel and we're very appreciative of them but I really wish that when he and Netanyahu stood in front of the camera and Netanyahu said we want a win and Sunak said yes I want you to win I truly hope that in private he asked Netanyahu what's a win because I feel that at this point what Israel needs is not a victory we need hope these are the darkest times in Israel people are desperate they're enraged they're hurt and what we need is hope and bringing back the 200 hostages saving 200 people that are we're talking about infants we're talking about pregnant women we're talking about the elderly we're talking about the elderly caretakers who are foreigners have nothing to do with this conflict bringing them back home saving their lives preventing 200 more tragedies from happening this is the kind of hope we need this is what would start turning the things around and the what has to happen in order for this to take place is to stop the fighting immediately the Israeli politicians are talking about bringing back the hostages I want to see them act when you make that call for a ceasefire perhaps even in conversation with friends how do people react to you within Israel it really depends I've seen people who are sworn peaceniks and leftists calling out for unbelievable violence the call for revenge is natural I expect politicians to think rationally and constantly think what is Israel's interests and if we are as president Biden put it if the value that we put on human life and human dignity that's what makes us who we are and that's what sets us apart for Hamas Hamas has proven that they have complete disregard for Palestinian lives and Israeli lives if that's what sets us apart we need to prove it not just talk about it who do you go in still to come a famous footballer turns singer what kind of performer are you on stage a great performer

of course you know that we'll hear more from the modest as ever Eric Cantona but before we move on here's Andrew Peach with news of this week's happy pod yes there's an animal theme this week with stories about whales in Australia that like to play with seaweed and a cat in Pennsylvania that wears glasses to encourage young children to wear their glasses too we've got innovation to offset climate change in Kenya Andy who managed to play croquet at the top of a mountain in Sequoia

National Park in California and Caroline who listens to the happy pod and got in touch to let us hear her children's orchestra in Bogota in Colombia so please join us for half an hour of uplifting stories from around the world in the happy pod available in this feed every Saturday

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let's go to Kenya now where a panic and tragic confusion outside a stadium in the west led to a crush which killed four people it's thought that people in a crowd mistook steam from tea that had been spilt for tear gas as well as the dead 13 people were injured the venue was hosting national day celebrations as Rachel Wright reports thousands of people had arrived in the small town

of Karicho to take part in the celebrations for Kenya's Meshuja or Hero's Day they began to enter the stadium around 1 a.m but local police said the crowd panicked when a storeholder spilled tea outside one of the entry gates and the steam was mistaken for tear gas despite the casualties the celebrations went ahead as planned and were led by the Kenyan president William Ruto when he arrived

later in the morning the police said they were conducting an investigation into the incident

let's go now to Italy where the prime minister is splitting up with her long-term partner

Georgia Maloney and Andrea Giambruno have been together for 10 years the couple have a daughter

but recordings emerge this week which seem to include Mr Giambruno talking about an affair that he'd had and also trying to use his position as a TV presenter to gain sexual favors our Europe

regional editor Paul Moss gave this update you know Robin you've got to hand it to the Italians haven't you I mean you just get a better class of sexual scandal other countries the politicians

and their partners get caught in embarrassing situations Italy from the ancient Romans through to Silvio Berlusconi it's always a bit more over the top to understand this affair what you've got

to remember is Georgia Maloney has been a champion of family values she's opposed to some aspects

of LGBT rights she's clamped down even on surrogate parenthood so it's always been rather pointed that

she herself is a single mother she never married the father of her child Andrea Giambruno maybe we now have a clue why these recordings made were made off air at the tv station where he works he

makes some very flirtatious remarks indeed to female colleagues it sounds like he had an affair and he also seems to suggest to women they could work on his team if they had group sex with him

now bear in mind he works for a television station owned by the Bolesconi family echoes there of Silvio Bolesconi and his infamous bunga bunga parties much more seriously to some there were remarks made by Mr Giambruno last August there'd been an appalling gang rape and he said if you avoid getting drunk and losing your senses you might also avoid running into certain problems and coming across a wolf it sounded to many like he was blaming the victim for being raped Georgia Maloney at the time distanced herself from those remarks but now it seems these these new recordings were the final straw okay just very quickly one word is she in trouble or is this going to be to her benefit i think in the end most Italians are focused on immigration that is the biggest you whether she could sort that out what her former partner may or may not have got up to less of a concern pulmos reporting politics now here in the UK with potentially serious repercussions because the governing conservative party has had an awful 24 hours in the early hours of Friday it lost two of its safest seats in parliament there were only elections in those small areas but it is the strongest sign yet that after 13 years in power the party could be heading for defeat in a general election that's due to be called by the end of next year the main opposition labor party overturned a huge majority in both seats so how important are these by elections

it was a question that i put to our political correspondent Rob Watson well i think they're very significant although it's absolutely true turnout tends to be low at these by elections and they're often used to give the party in power kicking if you look at however how these by elections compared to other ones since the second world war in other words you compare like with like Robin these are historically truly terrible and compare only really to the kind of defeat suffered by the conservatives under John Major before between 1992 and 7 and of course before the labor landslide under Tony Blair i mean the numbers on this are staggering aren't they and you know the experts they drill down on the numbers and they are only local elections but it was a staggering swing wasn't it away from the ruling conservatives towards the main opposition labor party absolutely and to tie all that together it's worth remembering Robin that for the for labor to beat the conservatives at the next election they need a massive swing of support of nearly 10 percent well these by elections they saw swings of over 20 percent and worth remember labor is consistently ahead of the conservatives in the polling by between sort of 15 and 20 percent now of course the conservatives point out that Sakir Starmer the labor leader he isn't as popular as Tony Blair which is true and that there's still time before the next election but again it's really worth remembering Robin no governing party has recovered from being this far behind in the polls since the second world war so unless something pretty dramatic turns up the conservatives could

be facing electoral armageddon as one of the uh their senior politicians put it Rob Watson reporting now get ready to hear about an immense period of time and some very very large distances traveled because astronomers have detected the most distant fast radio burst or FRB to date it was discovered by a team in Australia they were using a radio telescope Terry Egan has more on what the burst is and why we're talking about it a blast of radio waves lasting less than a millisecond and from so far away its light took eight billion years to reach us this FRB is one of the most energetic ever observed in that fraction of a second it released the equivalent of our sun's total emissions over 30 years often much brighter than the galaxies they come from FRBs disappear so quickly that they can be hard to detect so it's a moment to celebrate still it's not easy to know what they are the scientists think this one at the very limit of how far back

astronomers can currently see comes from several galaxies merging together but it could give us a new method to weigh up the universe current methods of estimating its mass give contradictory answers and challenge the standard model of cosmology more than half the matter that should be there appears to be missing scientists say it could be located in areas in between galaxies but is so hot and diffuse it can't be seen frb's such as this one could perhaps be used to measure what seems not to be there right let's end this global news podcast on a famous footballer turned poet turned actor turned he hopes singer eric cantona was one of the most talented footballers of his generation then he grew a beard and he turned his hand to other things now it's time for eric cantona the singer apparently next week the former manchester united legend embarks on his first ever tour of the uk which includes a song that he wrote which he says was inspired by that infamous karate kick attack on a spectator during a game our entertainment correspondent colin paterson went to meet him this is your first ever uk too what kind of performer are you on stage a great performer of course you know that i've been generous i've been selfish i've been marvelous

during his six seasons in english football cantona won the league five times and the f a cup twice fans chanted his name but now he's the one doing the singing watch yourself in the mirror so

eric cantona this singer how long has this been a dream of yours when i was a kid when i was a kid i had two passions it was art and sport football so i started by a football it's better i think i have a cheap need of expressing myself so when i stopped football i started to act including ken loach's film looking for eric funny isn't it sometimes we forget that you're just a man i'm not a man i am cantona and then the lockdown apparently arrived and then

i started guitar obsession hours i'm very bad guitar very very bad guitarist but that's what you write the song but good enough to write songs with my guitar and when it comes to writing you do the lyrics and you do the music yeah i feel of course more comfortable in french it's my language but english is very musical language uh french not so music and just like with his football career cantona is taking on the music industry in his own way no starting out as a support act for him ah no but me i'm the headliner you will always be the headliner of course you would never support anyone maybe the stones can't be sport paterson and cantona

that's all from us for now but there will 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 formerly known as twitter at global news pod this edition was mixed by chris lovelock the producer was alice and davis the editor is caron martin i'm robin browns until the next time if you can forget about eric canton are singing well good luck goodbye this a cast podcast is sponsored by net suite 36 000 the number of businesses which have upgraded to the number one cloud financial system net suite by oracle 25 net suite just turned 25 that's 25 years of helping businesses streamline their finances and reduce costs one because your unique business deserves a customized solution and that's

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