

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Civilians flee northern Gaza after Israeli warning

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I'm Robin Brant and in the early hours of Saturday the 14th of October these are our main stories. The UN Secretary General has warned that the situation in Gaza has reached a dangerous new low, as Israel prepares for what looks like a huge ground offensive. And Israel says its soldiers have already carried out localised raids in Gaza, looking for people kidnapped by Hamas during its assault last Saturday.

Also in this podcast, NASA is on its way to an asteroid. Could we mine them in the future? We begin in Gaza, where yesterday people in northern Gaza were told by the Israeli military they had 24 hours to leave and move to the south of the Strip. Israel has advised around one million people to depart the area. Hundreds of motorbikes, cars and trucks, some loaded with mattresses and other belongings, have been seen heading south. Some people are leaving on foot. The Palestinian Health Ministry says more than 1,900 people have been killed by Israeli airstrikes in Gaza. Israel says more than 1,300 of its citizens were killed during the Hamas attacks last Saturday. The organisation is designated as a terror group by countries including the United Kingdom. A UN agency operating in the region, UNRWA, has called the Israeli order horrendous, describing Gaza now as a hellhole. Juliet Tuma works for the agency.

We have been very stretched over the past few days. Our teams on the ground have been working around the clock to give people whatever was possible to give them, but we ran out. We ran out of basic supplies like mattresses, like hygiene kits, like water. We are very, very stretched and this is because we were not able to bring any supplies in. UNRWA was not able to bring anything into Gaza.

A few hours later, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres made clear how worried he is.

After days of airstrikes, the Israeli Defence Forces have ordered the Palestinians in Gaza City and its surroundings to move to the south of the territory. Moving more than 1 million people across a densely populated war zone to a place with no food, water or accommodation when the entire territory is under siege is extremely dangerous and in some cases simply not possible. Hospitals in the south of Gaza are already at capacity and will not be able to accept thousands of new patients from the north. The health system is on the brink of collapse. Marks are overflowing. 11 healthcare staff have been killed while on duty and there have been 34 attacks on health facilities in the past few days. The entire territory faces a water crisis as infrastructure has been damaged and there is no electricity to power pumps and desalination plants. Our United Nations staff and our partners are working around the clock to support the people of Gaza. We mourn for our colleagues who have been killed, a number that is increasing by the day. I've been in constant contact with the leaders across the region, focused on ways to reduce suffering and prevent further

dangerous escalation in the West Bank or elsewhere in the region, especially in southern Lebanon. The exchange of fire across the blue line is very worrying. It must stop. We need immediate humanitarian access throughout Gaza so that we can get food and water to everyone in need. Even wars have rules. International humanitarian law and human rights law must be respected and upheld. Civilians must be protected and also never use the shields. And all hostages in Gaza must be released immediately. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. Well, my colleague Matthew and Rolly Waller spoke to Dima Ghanem, who has moved south from Gaza City to Khan Yunus. What was her reaction when she first heard the 24-hour order from the Israeli authorities?

Tell me how difficult it has been to get to where you are so far from Gaza City, the last few hours. How difficult has the movement been?

Very difficult. People were crammed in the streets and some people were walking in the corners of the bay and fleeing from their houses to unknown destinations. And they were walking carrying their matches and fact-facts. Some people are camping in the streets. 80 percent of the population doesn't have cars, so they took, they think it's walking.

Did you have a car earlier? And in terms of where you've got to now, what is there for you?

Maybe it's safe. Now I am in the southern side now. So we are looking for a flat to go to because no place to go. One million people just evacuated their houses. So there is no place in the south. It's difficult to find a place.

People, despite the fact that people like Dima have moved, Hamas has urged people to ignore the evacuation order. The Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, told reporters that the Israeli demand for Gaza residents to leave their homes amounted to a crime against humanity.

There is no place in Gaza that is safe. Every place in Gaza is dangerous. So therefore we need to stop this war immediately. We need to send convoys of food and medicine to help the people there. And we need to stop this ethnic cleansing from taking place.

Well to get more details about the current situation from our Middle East correspondent Yolanda Nel, I spoke to her in Jerusalem.

You could see on footage Israeli drones overhead dropping these flyers. They were kind of raining down on the streets of Gaza City. People holding up these flyers, which said on them evacuate your homes immediately and go south. There was an arrow on a map that pointed the way. And although Hamas has been telling people not to leave, saying this is psychological warfare, quite quickly colleagues in Gaza were reporting they could see long lines of Palestinians on the move. Some people had got vehicles. They still had enough fuel left to drive cars or pick up trucks down towards the south. They had mattresses, bundles on the top. But there were also families who were just heading there on foot. Some of them leading their animals, those that come from the more rural parts of the north of the Gaza Strip, the outskirts of Gaza City. We're not quite sure of the numbers. I've seen some reports of thousands, but it's really not clear yet. Of course, the UN and others have been saying that this could have dire humanitarian consequences. The demand from Israel for this to happen supposedly within 24 hours. There's been some clarification from the Israeli military during the day saying that they know an evacuation will take longer than that. But they are insisting that this is something that civilians must do for their own safety. They're saying

that the Hamas militants hide, the terrorists hide, the Israeli defence minister said in the course of the day, among the civil population. So we need to separate them. Those who want to save their lives, please go south. We're going to destroy Hamas infrastructures, Hamas military establishment. He said we're going to take this phenomenon out of Gaza and out of the earth. And that's the logic behind this, is it, behind Israel's order to evacuate, get the civilians out, those who want to go. And what's left is Hamas legitimate targets for the IDF when this incursion comes, if indeed it comes. What Israel is also really wanting to go after are some of the underground sort of tunnel installations. It knows that Hamas has headquarters that it has been unable to get to successfully in previous conflicts. Of course, this is the fifth war that we've had between Israel and militants in Gaza in the last 15 years. And this is the heaviest bombardment by Israel that we have ever seen in response to just those awful dramatic attacks, the sudden attacks by Hamas. And through the day in Israel as well, I should say, funerals have been continuing to play place. We're still hearing that there are actually dozens of bodies of people who were killed in the attacks that remain unidentified. Yolande now reporting. Well, in recent days, Israeli forces have been massing near the border with Gaza. On Thursday evening, the Israeli army said it had already launched some localised raids into Gaza as its forces prepared to launch a bigger major ground offensive. An Israeli military spokesman said the aim was to remove terrorists and search for hostages. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his country's retaliation against the Hamas attacks was only the beginning. We are striking at our enemies with unprecedented might. I emphasise, this is just the beginning. Our enemies have only begun paying the price. I won't go into detail what is yet to come, but I tell you that this is only the beginning. Israel last sent ground troops into Gaza in 2014. With hundreds of thousands of soldiers now on or near the border, southern Israel appears to be on a full war footing. Our correspondent, Dan Johnson, has been speaking to Israeli soldiers who may be involved in any coming ground war. He sent this report. Israel's military might has been moved into position ready for a possible assault on Gaza. Israeli drivers were supporting their troops as the tanks rolled forward. And we got through to Michael, a special forces soldier who seemed to know what his orders would be. What's going to happen? I think everybody knows what's going to happen. We want to take down Hamas. When we started, we decided to go to war and it's going to be a very different war that we knew before. I think we're going to go inside and take down Hamas people. We do this for our country and we're going to fight for it all the way. And now we're licking our wounds and it's not the time for us to cry. We're going to have time to cry about our friends and our families. Even my three friends are kidnapped over there. But now we have to go inside and stop it. We have to. And this situation, we're telling the Gaza people to get out. Who's not involved? Get out from the houses. Get out, okay? Because we're going to go in and we're going to go in hard and strong. The strongest they ever saw. Are you confident you'll achieve your aim? No doubt. No doubt. Gaza strip won't stay the same after this war. And we are not afraid. I'm telling you that for sure. In Tel Aviv, Israelis are considering what is to come next. They know people in Gaza have been given a deadline of midnight to get to a place of safety. That potentially could signal a ground invasion. I don't feel safe. After what's happened, I don't feel safe. Would invading Gaza improve that? Of course. I don't know. I don't know. It's

a hard question to answer. I don't know if that's what will help or make things worse. I don't think anyone knows. I just know that we can't keep living like that. I'm in an Israeli ambulance, which is driving into the basement of the main hospital here in Haifa. This is a training run to prepare for using the emergency underground facilities here that are ready in case there are missile attacks, meaning large numbers of casualties or the hospital has to be evacuated underground. Down here, three levels beneath the hospital, the beds go on and on and on. They got the alert the day after the attacks, and this was kitted out in just three days. My name is Amichai. I'm the surgeon of the company that work here. Haifa, where we are now, from Lebanon, the threat, the war, that was the last threat. We are ready for everything to happen. We are aware that anything can happen How does it feel to see the country preparing for war, for more violence?

I hope nobody will need any bed here. And I'm thinking about today, you know. So today, the country is in the status of war. So for me, yeah, we're in war until someone will tell me we're not in war anymore. Look, the fact that an entire hospital can be relocated underground is a real testament to Israel's funding and resourcing, its capacity in terms of emergency response, health care, and its military too. But the contrast with what the people of Gaza are enduring with overwhelmed health care services, broken power supplies, lack of resources, it really couldn't be starker.

Dan Johnson reporting. Well, one of the big concerns in this war is that other countries may get drawn into the fighting. Here's Lebanon's foreign minister, Abdullah Bouhabib, speaking to the BBC. It looks like Israel is going all the way to demolish Gaza with some kind of Western support. This is not acceptable Arab wise and not acceptable to many groups in Lebanon and in Syria and in Jordan and in the West Bank. And therefore there could be an explosion. There could be a war, regional war.

Russians have been escalating along the border between Lebanon and Israel. During Friday there was cross-border fire from both sides. At least one journalist was killed in southern Lebanon in what eyewitnesses say was Israeli shelling. The Reuters news agency confirmed the death of its videographer, Isam Abdullah, and said two of his colleagues had also been injured. Now, as the example of Hamas shows, it's not just nation states that get involved. One of the biggest factions in Lebanon is Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed Islamist group that's widely regarded as a terror organisation, including by the Arab League. Its supporters held a rally in Beirut in support of Palestinians in Gaza. And the group's deputy leader in Lebanon Naim Qasam said it was fully prepared to join Hamas in the war when the time was right. We at Hezbollah contribute to the confrontation and will contribute to it within our vision and our plan. We follow the moves of the enemy and we are fully ready. When the time comes for any action, we will carry it out.

Well, the White House in Washington, D.C., has said that it has seen no sign that Hezbollah is preparing to enter the conflict at the moment. Correspondent Hugo Bachega is in southern Lebanon.

Here, there is tension because there is the question that has been hanging over this country since this war started. What is Hezbollah going to do? I think we've seen in the last few days that Hezbollah and Israel have exchanged rockets and shelling several times since this conflict between Israel and Hamas broke out on Saturday. And yesterday, I was in a village near the blue line, which is the unofficial border between Lebanon and Israel. And there

was almost nobody there. The only people who were there were checking the damage that had been caused again after another round of violence between militants in Lebanon and Israel. So I think lots of people here fear that Lebanon could be dragged into this conflict, turning this into a regional war.

And the latest incident happened just hours ago. The Israeli military said they responded to an attack by Hezbollah in the south of the country in a village called Al-Mah Al-Sha'ab. There was shelling from Israel and we're hearing now from our colleagues at Al-Jazeera Arabic that at least two members of their team were wounded.

So what we're getting is limited military interactions between Hezbollah in the south of Lebanon and Israeli forces. But so far, that's all. But there is a huge concern, I take it, about the prospect of an escalation. Is that correct?

Exactly. I think what Hezbollah is trying to do is to show Israel that it is ready.

It is prepared. And I think these were the words used today by Hezbollah's number two, who said, we are prepared. We are ready. We are following developments moment by moment. I think it was also very interesting that he said that the group wouldn't be intimidated by calls being made by the U.S., by other countries, warning Hezbollah against any kind of involvement in this conflict. And I mean, don't forget the numbers here when we talk about Hezbollah. They say they've got 100,000 fighters. Many of them were fighting in Syria, have returned to the country, so they're really well trained. Hezbollah also has a vast arsenal of precision rockets that can hit Israel. Yesterday, the U.S. Defense Secretary said there were no signs, clear signs that Hezbollah was planning to do something bigger, was preparing to have a major involvement in this conflict. So we haven't seen the evidence yet that Hezbollah is preparing to join Hamas in this war. But obviously, there's a lot of concern here on this side of the border. Hugo Bachege reporting from southern Lebanon. Diplomacy in the region continues to try to end or at least limit the conflict. America's Secretary of State says Washington is working with Qatar to secure the release of hostages seized by Hamas. Anthony Blinken was speaking after talks with the Qatari Prime Minister on the third leg of his fast-paced Middle East tour. At least 27 American nationals are known to be among those being held in Gaza. Mr. Blinken repeated his full backing for Israel's war on Hamas, but stressed the importance of creating safe areas for civilians in Gaza.

Our focus now is on helping to create safe zones, and we're doing that with the leading international organizations. We're doing that engaged with Israel, and we're working with other countries to that end. We think this is the best way to make sure that civilians who are caught in a crossfire of Hamas' making can be safe and receive the assistance they need.

Meanwhile, protests have been taking place across the Middle East in support of Palestinians in Gaza, following a call for demonstrations by Hamas. At least nine Palestinian protesters were killed by Israeli forces during clashes in towns and cities in the occupied West Bank. There have also been big pro-Palestinian protests in Iran, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon, as well as in other parts of Asia and Western cities. Jewish groups have held pro-Israel rallies in both the US and Europe.

Let's step away from Gaza and Israel for now.

France's Interior Minister, Gérald Damana, has said there was probably a link between what's happening in the Middle East and an attack at a school in Arras in northern France.

The teacher was stabbed to death, three other staff were injured before the attacker at the school was subdued. Mr Damana said France was now on its highest state of alert. The attacker, who's of Chechen origin and on a national register of Islamist radicals, was arrested at the scene. Hugh Scofield reports from Paris.

The attacker, who's been named as 20-year-old Russian national Mohammed Moghuchkov, arrived at the school in central Arras at around 11 o'clock. After stabbing and killing a French teacher, he attacked a security guard and another teacher before being overwhelmed. Witnesses say he shouted out, Allah Akbar. All schools here, not just Jewish schools, have been on alert since the Hamas attacks in Israel. President Macron came to the school to show the nation's solidarity with staff and pupils.

The best proof of our resolve is the decision of the head teacher here to open the school tomorrow. It's a choice not to yield to terror, to let nothing divide us, and to recall armored schools and education are at the centre of the fight against ignorance.

Mohammed Moghuchkov was known to the security services as a potential danger. As a pupil at the school, he'd alarmed teachers with his expressions of Islamic radicalism. His attack comes three years almost to the day since another killing of a teacher that horrified France. Samuel Patti was beheaded at his school outside Paris after he showed a civics class a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed. His killer was also a young Chechen man.

Hugh Scofield. And before we move on, let's hear about this weekend's happy poet with Andrew Peach.

Yes, there are many things in the world it's hard to feel positive about, one of them being the climate crisis. But we've been talking to the tech giant Bill Gates and he says there are reasons to look on the bright side. Also this week, scientists in Spain on a new way of spotting breast cancer, the Caribbean island that's been turned from a desolate rock to a wildlife haven, and world records being smashed all over the place from the fastest marathon in Chicago to the biggest pumpkin in Minnesota. Do join me for the happy part available in this feed or wherever you get your BBC podcasts every Saturday.

Welcome back to the Global News Podcast. People in New Zealand are voting in a general election today that appears likely to dislodge the centre-left Labour government after six years in office. The soaring cost of living after COVID lockdowns has been a key issue in the campaign, as Phil Mercer explains.

New Zealand's election is lacking the star power of the former Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. She resigned in January and her successor Chris Hipkins appears unlikely to form the next government. The centre-right National Party is expected to have the largest share of the votes, but might not have enough seats in Parliament to govern outright. The result of the election could depend on the populist politician Winston Peters and his New Zealand First Party. It's previously formed coalition government with both the Labour and National Parties.

Now for the first time, NASA has launched a mission to explore a metal-rich asteroid. A small spacecraft has set off from Florida to land on Psyche, which was discovered more than 170 years ago. Astronomers believe the asteroid is up to 60% iron and nickel, and could contain vital clues about how our planet Earth came to exist. Our science correspondent Jonathan Amos told us more.

This asteroid is somewhere out beyond Mars, somewhere between Mars and Jupiter. But we

would like to know about the interior of the Earth. We have this metal core at the centre of the Earth. We have a liquid core and also a solidified core as well, this two-part core that we have. It's the thing that generates the magnetic field on Earth. Now, we can't drill down to the Earth's core to study it. It's too far down, 6,000 kilometres or so. We want to go to somewhere where we might be able to see a core that is exposed. And this is what Psyche may be, Robin. It may be a core that developed in a planet that failed right at the beginning of the solar system. So it kind of started to go like the Earth, it developed a metal core, and then it stopped. And its exterior rock layers, we've still got our rock layers, then got knocked off by asteroid impacts. Other asteroids bashing into it to leave this exposed surface that we think is iron and nickel. So, you know, we go to outer space to study inner space, if you like.

Let's put our commercial heads on and talk a little bit about asteroid mining. You know, is it possible? Is there a potential for this?

Well, I've seen someone try and calculate just how much Psyche might be worth if you would have put it on the metal markets here on planet Earth. And it would be trillions and trillions of dollars. Of course, you'd completely flood the market, the price would crash. But it would be an amazing resource, right? It's too far away to go mine. But that hasn't stopped people thinking about mining asteroids that are nearer to Earth. To look for some of the more precious metals, if we can call them that, you know, the Platnums, these kinds of metals. It could happen in the future. We don't have the technology to do it just yet. I think more near term what's likely to happen is you might see spacecraft land on an asteroid, mine it for the resource that enables it then to carry on. It might mine ices. If you get ices, water ice, you can split that up to make a rocket fuel and then you can carry on. That's probably more near term.

Jonathan Amos on the asteroid. The government of Burkina Faso says it has signed an agreement with Russia for the construction of a nuclear power plant. It's military rulers who seized power just over a year ago have been strengthening ties with Moscow. Our West Africa correspondent

Mayony Jones has more. News of the agreement will be welcomed in Burkina Faso, where less than 23% of the population has access to electricity. The deal is part of the Burkina government's target for 95% of urban populations and 50% of rural ones to have access to electricity by 2030. The agreement was signed at the Russian Energy Week in Moscow, which was attended by Burkina Faso's energy minister. According to Russia's state atomic energy agency, Rosatom, the agreement is the first between the two countries in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

It says it hopes it will be a first step towards greater cooperation for the use of nuclear energy in manufacturing, agriculture and medicine. Now there's been quite a lot to take in and digest in this podcast. So let's end it on this. A legend. The broadcaster and naturalist David Attenborough is considered one of the world's most prominent environmentalists. So David, or just plain Mr. Attenborough as he was known back then, first appeared on a black and white TV screen presenting a natural history programme called ZooQuest in 1954. Since then, he's been highlighting wildlife and environmental concerns around the world. Now at the age of 97, yes, 97, he's bringing out another edition of his famous wildlife TV series, Planet Earth. This one is aptly named Planet Earth 3. They're programmes that have been sold and seen around the world. Well, our climate editor, Justin Roelat, watched

the new series and also rummaged through Sir David's original documentaries from many years ago. After a fortnight of travelling north, we at last sighted Rain Island. At 97 Sir David Attenborough has had a unique perspective on the changes our species has wrought upon the planet. I was 31 and it was here that I first met a green turtle. He first visited Rain Island off the coast of Australia way back in 1957. And after a night spent laying maybe over 100 eggs, she's very weary and very anxious to get back to the sea. These days the turtles face even greater perils. The sex of baby turtles is determined by the temperature of the sand. Rising temperatures mean 99% of them are now born female, threatening the future of the species. This little fellow is newly hatched. Having at last successfully reached the water, he's still got a great number of hazards to face before he grows up. Little did I know then what hazards that little turtle would have to face. In the 66 years since my visit, Rain Island has remained the most important green turtle nesting site on the planet. The question is, can it last another lifetime? But there is hope. Nature can rebound. We will see how animals are adapting in extraordinary ways to survive the new challenges they face. The images are stunning. At this crucial time in our history, we must now look at the world through a new lens. The message is, we can still protect the wonders of nature. Justin Roelatz on David Attenborough, still teaching us so much at 97. And 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@bbc.co.uk. You can also find us on ex, formerly known as Twitter, at Global NewsPod. This edition was mixed brilliantly by Nick Randall. The producer was Liam McCheffrey, the editor, as always, Karen Martin. I'm Robin Brandt. Thanks for listening. Until next time, goodbye.