

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Demonstrations continue in Israel after the passing of reform law

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

I'm Janet Jalil and in the early hours of Tuesday the 25th of July these are our main stories.

Huge demonstrations have continued into the night in Israel over the passing of a controversial new law aimed at curbing the powers of the Supreme Court. Wildfires have killed more than 30 people in Algeria as a heatwave rages across the Mediterranean. Also in this podcast.

She will be in the wild in a sanctuary environment where she has natural water, seas, the weather. She's enriched by the critters that are swimming through her environment. How a killer whale which has spent more than 50 years in captivity in Florida could soon be getting a taste of freedom.

The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has defended his government's controversial move to

limit the powers of the Supreme Court describing it as necessary, though he has kept the door open for negotiations. His comments came even as fierce protests looked set to continue into the night.

We did agree to stop the legislation. It was halted for three consecutive months.

We agreed significant changes to the original policy and I say with sadness none of the compromise proposal was accepted. None. Even today during voting up until the last moment we tried to get agreements but the other side kept refusing.

But his words failed to heal the deep divide in Israeli society which has seen volunteer reservists in the military threatened to stop reporting for duty and businesses shuttered their doors in protest. The Israeli opposition has said it will appeal against the new law at the Supreme Court. Our Middle East correspondent Tom Bateman followed the day's events in Israel.

This is a main highway in Jerusalem blocked by protesters security forces pushing into them with the front of a water cannon that surrounded it. It was now violent scuffle as the police are trying to push protesters off the motorway. This is the gulf of division that is erupted in Israel. This is my country and baby kidnapped our citizen and it's not supposed to be. We need to be here. I starve in the army. I have three little boys and I want to continue to stay in my country. I'm pretty scared. I'm a history teacher. Israel has been a democracy till now but we all know all the people here know that it's the beginning of the end. The protests built all day around Israel's parliament, the Knesset. It was fortified and fenced off with barricades and barbed wire as the critical vote neared. It was the first bill in a series of proposed measures by Mr Netanyahu's religious nationalist coalition to limit the power of Israel's courts. The prime minister hours after his discharge from hospital where he'd had surgery to fit a pacemaker, walked into the chamber looking tired, subdued but knowing he would win. The opposition walked out in protest seeing the entire package as an attack on democracy and the bill passed 64 votes to nothing. The Justice Minister Yareev Lavine who spearheaded the reforms tried to calm the critics.

It is an extraordinary moment. We've taken the first step in a historic process to correct the

judicial system and restore powers which were taken from the government over many years he said. Today's showdown has been the culmination of months of demonstration and dissent pitting secular against religious, liberal against nationalist. The protests spread into the ranks of the security establishment and so many see this as the greatest internal chasm among Jewish Israelis since the state's foundation. Critics now blocking the streets fear the changes pave the road to unchecked populism and theocracy. The opposition leader Yarev Lapid addressed MPs. There is no prime minister in Israel. Netanyahu has become a puppet on the strings of messianic extremists he said. The opposition says it will petition the High Court to strike down the new law. Judges will be asked to restore powers the politicians have just removed from them.

As the protests mount the stage is set for a constitutional crisis.

Tom Bateman while the White House has renewed its reservations about Israel's judicial reform it said it was unfortunate Monday's vote took place with the slimmest possible majority.

From Washington, Sean Dilly reports. Joe Biden has a long history of supporting Israel.

He once described the country as the single greatest friend America has in the Middle East.

Today though the White House said that President Biden had publicly and privately expressed his views that major changes in a democracy to be enduring must have a broad a consensus as possible.

The message between the lines of the White House statement is clear America's support for Israel

is not limitless. Sean Dilly wildfires in Algeria have killed more than 30 people including 10

soldiers as large swathes of North Africa and Southern Europe continue to experience record

high temperatures. Thousands of firefighters in Algeria have been battling the blazes in the

mountainous Bijja and Bariya areas of Algeria. In neighboring Tunisia wildfires have also

swept through the border town of Maloula. Across both countries thousands of people have been

evacuated. Our Arab affairs regional editor Mike Thompson told us more. There have been wildfires

in many parts of Algeria mainly in the north and the two worst affected places as you mentioned

there Bariya the mountainous region there about 100 kilometers southeast of Algiers and Meshija

on the coast about another couple of hundred kilometers east and there have been some some

very bad fires there and to give you some idea on Sunday alone there were 97 fires countered in

that region so an extraordinary number and we've had to have 1500 people evacuated and it's a

really

huge scale operation. I mean last year the Algerian authorities were criticized and the year before in

fact for not investing enough in equipment to fight fires like this which aren't uncommon

although there are more of them now because of the particularly intense temperatures and they've

invested in a huge range of equipment like 350 fire engines for instance and 12 aircraft to

to water bomb these blazers. And there are also intense temperatures in Tunisia as well. Yes indeed

near the border town of Maloula in northwest Tunisia we've seen hundreds of people

evacuated not only by road but also by boats because these two countries Algeria and Tunisia

experienced the highest temperatures in the region and the largest number of fires. Mike Thompson

while emergency services in Greece have also been trying to control dozens of fires that are raging

in some of the country's top tourist destinations. On the Greek island of Rhodes the wildfires there

have forced 19,000 people to leave their homes and hotels since the weekend. Officials on another

island Corfu have blamed arson for the fires there but say most of them are now under control.

Even as frantic evacuation efforts continue the Greek Prime Minister Kiriakos Mitsotakis warned

there would be more days of destruction. We definitely still have three difficult days ahead

of us. We estimate that we will have a de-escalation of the heat wave but it is certain that over the next few days over the next few weeks we must all remain on constant alert. We are at war focused exclusively on the front with the fires. We will rebuild all that was lost and compensate those that were stricken. We got more from our reporter in Rhodes as a day Mishiri. When I spoke to the fire service they said that the fire here on Rhodes is the hardest one to handle because of the terrain, because of the tall trees, the greenery, the wind. This is the island that is a problem for the fire service time and time again and yet when you couple that with very difficult weather conditions a potentially historic heat wave. It could be the longest heat wave that Greece has experienced in its recorded history. It could last up to 17 days. That means that these wildfires are an even bigger problem for the country and that's why even though they say it's more under control than it was a few days ago when we saw those scenes of orange haze in the skies smoke across the island. People fleeing their results from what was meant to be a wonderful holiday. That's not been the case for now and firefighters don't know when this situation is quite going to end because as you say these fires are spreading and other islands have had to experience similar issues as well even though Corfu and Evia are now under control. The focus here at the airport is repatriation. People are frustrated with their airlines but at the end of the day we are seeing people make it back home. As day Mishiri at Rhodes airport in Greece. So how unusual is this weather for the Mediterranean region? Thomas Schaffenacker from BBC Weather told us more. Well the heat we're experiencing in North Africa is part of a much larger heat wave that's affecting areas as far north as Italy and the Balkans and it's been on and off there for a very long time now and it's actually quite simple. It's very hot air from the Sahara desert that has been shifting northwards over the last few weeks and certainly peaking in the last few days and the reason why this hot air is moving northwards out of the Sahara it's because the air is being moved around by various currents of air in the atmosphere and they are just moving northwards and with that the heat spreads to so many other parts of the country to an extent that's not normally seen. Of course Algeria is a hot country but even for this part of the world the temperatures we're experiencing are near record breaking and even in the last day or so we've been experiencing record breaking temperatures I think some of the airports there have been registering around 49 degrees Celsius. And how long is this scorching weather likely to continue? Well I'm sure we'll continue to have heat waves on and off across this part of the world and the Mediterranean for the rest of the summer that seems to be the pattern but what we are seeing is these very specific peaks in the heat wave that occur and last for a few days so I think northern parts of Africa are in a peak at the moment but in the next two or three days we'll see slightly less hot air this time arriving from the north so that hot African air will go back will retreat back into the central Sahara so it'll still be hot but we're not the high 40s closer to the high 30s. Thomas Schaffernacker after yet more Russian drone attacks on Ukrainian port infrastructure the governor of Odessa region has accused Moscow of trying to stop Ukraine feeding the world. The United Nations Secretary General has called on Russia to return to a deal which allowed ships to export Ukrainian grain

without being attacked. Sasha Schlitter reports. Governor Alekh Kipper pulled no punches. Russia he said was trying to fully block the export of Ukraine's grain and make the world starve. It's exactly a week since Russia withdrew from the Black Sea grain deal since then practically every night has been targeting the very grain whose exports it had been allowing. A sustained drone attack left a huge terminal completely destroyed in Odessa port. The same happened to three depots in the river port of Rene. The grain was supposed to prevent hunger in Africa and with its leaders flying into St Petersburg for a summit this Thursday President Putin might have some awkward explaining to do. Sasha Schlitter. While the Russian missile attacks in Odessa also badly damaged the Transfiguration Cathedral in the UNESCO World Heritage Listed City Centre. Russia claimed its targets in Odessa were being used to prepare what it called terrorist acts and blamed Sunday's Cathedral attack on Ukrainian air defence. Our Ukraine correspondent James Waterhouse sent us this report from the Cathedral. A service in Russian in Southern Ukraine. Odessa's biggest cathedral is a Christian Orthodox place of worship. It has links to Moscow yet on Sunday it was hit by a Russian missile. There has been endless activity since the missile struck. The service is taking place as normal outside. People are gathering on the grassy banks and there is a very obvious reason for that because if we move through you're met with the dusty striking frame of the cathedral. You can see the gold leaf pattern which climbed the wall still but when you look up there is no roof. Teams here have been ferociously trying to clear up what they can. For people like Olga it's a difficult future. This was our favourite place to walk. My children and I. This was the centre of our city a place dear to all of us. I think the Russians are just taking revenge on us for not joining them. The city has found itself at the sharp end of Russia's decision to pull out of a landmark agreement which allowed Ukraine to export grain through the Black Sea as the Mayor Gennady Trukanov points out. I think Russia has chosen Odessa as the main target. They want to stop the grain agreement and show that nothing will work without them. The most terrible thing is that in order to achieve their goal they've attacked innocent people. And this is where it all begins on fields like this in the rural Poltava region of central Ukraine. There is a huge queue of HGV lorries almost like they're waiting for a border crossing but we are in the middle of nowhere. There are two combined harvesters working an enormous field with stalks getting into their slipstreams looking for any mice that might be uncovered and the grain is then loaded onto the lorries before making their way to a processing plant. They are then tested by lab technicians like Yulia. These people probably don't understand what hunger is. People are starving. There's a large supply but they're being denied it for no reason. This site is owned by Kernel, one of Ukraine's biggest grain producers, which thinks the country's exports will be halved with the deals collapse. Its CEO is Yevgen Osbyov. Now it's a huge challenge for Ukrainian farmers. All of these difficulties with the logistics and export. The farmers need to sell their products for the next planting season. The farmers will reduce the number of hectares. When you're stood 40 meters up looking through the holes of the metal flooring to the earth below you're left in no doubt of the scale of Ukrainian grain. There is vast agricultural expanse in all directions. Now this plant can hold 120,000 tons of grain. It's a third full at the moment and without the grain deal it will just keep filling up. This country won't just suddenly stop producing grain and not just that. Sites like

this have now become military targets for Russia. Alternative routes over land or through the Danube

River are being touted but they're more expensive, have less capacity and are politically sensitive. The agricultural minister, Mikola Soloski, admits it's not good news for the millions who rely on Ukrainian grain to survive. Not only Ukrainian farmers need it but I think probably every country around the world need it because you don't have Ukrainian grain today or tomorrow you pay more when you visit supermarket. In Odessa the clearing of destroyed buildings is again a daily routine. The grain deal had a short life but it worked. Its death has caused fears of a global food crisis to return. That report by James Waterhouse in Ukraine. Still to come.

By Saudi Arabian standards this is a monstrous offer you know up to 350 million dollars it seems they want to pay for Kilian and Bapu who are kept in France at the recent World Cup. But will it be enough to persuade one of the world's greatest football stars to move to Riyadh?

The Women's World Cup has kicked off in Australia and New Zealand.

This World Cup is going to be the biggest and best and most competitive.

Join me, Manny Jasmy, Katie Smith and Maz Farouk for all the latest from the tournaments on World Football at the Women's World Cup. Just to be in front of that type of crowd I'm so excited for you know like fans always make the experience like 10 times better.

That's World Football at the Women's World Cup from the BBC World Service.

Find it wherever you get your BBC podcasts.

Welcome back to the Global News podcast. Twitter's owner Elon Musk has rebranded the social media site and replaced the distinctive bird logo with an X. He's previously spoken of wanting to create a so-called everything app as our technology editor Zoe Kleinman explains.

Twitter, or perhaps I should say the social network formerly known as Twitter, has rarely been out of the headlines during its rollercoaster nine months under the leadership of Elon Musk. He's made no secret of his desire to create what he describes as a super app, one platform where users can access social media, make payments, do shopping and banking. The closest comparison is with the Chinese app WeChat but there isn't really something similar in the West as yet. And we know Mr Musk is also keen on the letter X. It's the first name of his first child with the musician Grimes and he recently registered an AI startup called XAI.

US tech firms are no strangers to a rebrand. The owner of Facebook changed its name to Meta and Google became Alphabet with Google remaining as one of the companies under its umbrella. Elon Musk has been candid about Twitter's need to bring in more cash.

Despite the optional subscription fee, it still makes most of its money from ads.

But whether advertisers will welcome X's new coat of paint and flock towards it remains to be seen.

Zoe Kleinman, Norway's government says there's been a cyber attack on 12 of its ministries.

Police are investigating. It's the latest in a series of cyber attacks on the public sector of Europe's largest gas supplier and NATO's northernmost member. Siegfried Erbjelvik is Norway's minister of local government and regional development. My colleague, Rebecca Kesby, asked him how the attack had been detected. I can't go into how this was affected but it was affected by the Norwegian government security and service organization and they are in close cooperation with the national security authority and also the police and also have informed us in the government. Also, we will inform the extended foreign affairs and defense committee in the Norwegian parliament because it's 12 ministries in Norway

been detected a cyber attack on their ICT platform and of course that's a very serious matter. Which ministries were targeted? It's all ministries except for the office of the prime minister, the ministry of the defense, the ministry of justice and public security and the ministry of foreign affairs. Those ministries are not affected by this attack. Well, that's interesting because you would assume that they would be the most interesting ministries to attack. Is there a reason perhaps maybe they had better defenses? Did they those ministries? Well, this attack is pointing towards a common ICT platform used by 12 ministries and the Norwegian government security and service organization is cooperating closely with the national security authority and the police on handling it. So, who do you blame for this? Because Norway has been the victim of serious cyber attacks before, not least last year when it was blamed on a criminal pro-Russian group that was in June last year I think and presumably security had been tightened up as a result of that attack but who do you think may be behind this latest one?

That's true that in the past Norway has been attacked from hackers from Russia and also other countries but it's still too early to say anything about who is behind the attack that we are seeing these days. That's got to be cause for concern, hasn't it? Absolutely, it's very important to focus on cyber and cyber security. Earlier on we have seen an attack on the Norwegian parliament and

also Norwegian companies and I think also in other countries you have seen the same so it's very important to focus on cyber security and therefore it's also very important that the Norwegian government security and service organization have detected this cyber attack and also that we have an investigation going on and also different measures in response to the attack.

Sigbjørn Jalsvik, Norway's Minister of Local Government and Regional Development.

The war in Sudan has been raging for just over a hundred days. In that time thousands have been killed and millions forced to flee their homes as the army in a rival paramilitary force, the rapid support forces, battle for power. And two decades after the genocide in Darfur horrified the world the same region is again experiencing some of the worst violence.

Human rights groups say Arab militias backed by the RSF are ethnically cleansing the African marcelite population of Darfur. Our reporter Mercy Juma spoke to mothers on the border with Chad who fled there. A warning their testimony is disturbing.

I am at the Audrey refugee camp at the border of Chad in Sudan.

Holding a three-week-old baby boy, Arafa Adum leads me through rows of makeshift hearts made by sticks and covered by colored pieces of clothing. She tells me she gave birth as she crossed into Chad from Sudan. I delivered it on the road. There were no midwives and no one to support me. Everybody was walking. Everyone was thinking of themselves. Everyone was running to save their lives. No one is turning to look at you. The baby got out. I wrapped it up. I didn't think of anything else. I continued walking to Audrey. She has named the boy Mohammed, a mother of eight.

Arafa crossed over with her four girls, but she left the bodies of her three sons behind and buried. They were three, seven, and nine. She says the rapid support forces killed them in an attack. This former radio presenter says the RSF came for them wherever they hid at home, schools, and health facilities, and it's the men and boys that were killed fast.

When they came home, they did not declare war. They surprised us. They struck us before the iftar. They killed my uncles, cousins, and brothers in their homes. We ran and hid inside the

university.

When the Janjaweed came, they set fire in the eastern part of the university.

When people began to flee, they dropped the bombs, and so many families perished.

They threw so many bodies in the river. The main hospital in Audrey is filled beyond capacity.

Most patients have gunshot wounds. The doctors without borders have turned inflatable tents into an emergency-filled hospital. Here we are in the General Ministry of Health's District Audrey Hospital, which was, I think, something around 35 to 40 beds total, meaning pediatrics, maternity, surgical, and internal medicine. And now, in just the last past two weeks, we've received more than like 1,000 surgical cases.

In one tent, there are tens of women and their babies, all of them with gunshot wounds.

They come from various towns and villages in Darfur, Sudan.

Both Naima and her nine-month-old son were shot as they fled their village.

I was carrying my son and walking on the street, and people were leaving, getting away.

The bullet came from the direction of the north, and we were heading west.

At that moment, the boy was strapped to my back. I heard the bullet go through him and hit me on my side, and it narrowly missed my kidney. We were both bleeding, and no one was helping us.

After four months of war in Sudan, the Masalid ethnic group in West Darfur have borne the brunt of the casualties, in what some have called an ethnic cleansing by Arab militias,

backed by the paramilitary rapid support forces. Rakhia Adum is the wife of a Masalid leader who fled Junaena. She says a \$350,000 reward was put on his head so the family separated in order to hide. They took all our money and all our funds. We had some gold,

but no one to buy it. We offered the guy with the car the gold to take us a few kilometers out.

As they fled to get to the child border at every checkpoint marked by RSF, the refugees we spoke to said everyone's ethnicity was questioned. Some lied, saying they were Arabs, and managed to get through. But those found to be Masalid, they say, were doused with petrol and burnt or shot.

That report by Mercy Juma, who was speaking to Sudanese refugees on the border with Chad.

We all know football players can earn astronomical sums, but recently teams in Saudi Arabia have been

upping the stakes even higher. The club, Al-Hilal, has offered a record amount,

more than \$300 million, for the star forward Kilian Mbappé. And his current side,

Paris Saint-Germain, have now granted permission for him to speak to the Saudi team.

Our sports news correspondent, Alex Kapstik, told us more.

By Saudi Arabian standards, this is a monstrous offer. You know, up to \$350 million, it seems, they want to pay for Kilian Mbappé, who kept in France at the recent World Cup, to second place in that tournament behind Argentina, had a fabulous tournament, regardless of one of the world's best players. And it seems they're prepared to have him and pay that money for him for just one season. The situation at PSG is that they have given Mbappé permission to speak to Al-Hilal. The reason this is happening is because Kilian Mbappé's contract with PSG ends next year. He's got one year left on his contract. He said he will honour his contract, but if they leave it until the end of that deal, it means he can move to another club without commanding a transfer fee. And PSG, after the money they've invested in the player, they paid more than \$200 million for him when he joined in 2015, 2016, so they want their money back and they will get obviously a huge sum if they sell him. He wasn't picked to go on their

preseason tour of Japan because there was a standoff between Kilian Mbappé and the club's owners. It's Qatari owned the club and it seems now that they are prepared to sell him to Al-Hilal in Saudi Arabia if that's what the player wants. So that's where we are at the moment. He's allowed to talk to them, but the deal hasn't been signed, sealed and delivered just yet.

Do we have any idea what he does want? We understand that Kilian Mbappé wants to play for Real Madrid and all the speculation is that that will happen or that was going to happen at the end of next year, so in one in 12 months time, once his contract had expired at Paris Saint-Germain

and that's why it seems Al-Hilal recognised this and it may be that they are prepared to pay the money if it is only for one season. Alex Kapstik. For five decades, the killer whale known as Toki has been held in captivity. She has spent her life performing for crowds in Florida, but the new owners of Sea Aquarium have agreed to release her, so she's going to be heading to a natural marine sanctuary in the Pacific Northwest later this year. Amazingly, some of her relatives are known to still be alive, including a 90-year-old whale believed to be her mother. My colleague, Evan Davis, heard more from the co-founder of the group Friends of Toki and director of the Whales Sanctuary Project, Charles Vinnick. This is a remarkable story. This is a collaboration between the CEO and the primary owner of the dolphin company and a number of us who have been involved in ocean conservation and, if you will, working for the benefit of whales in the wild and in captivity, but this is really not about a release. This is about returning her to a natural environment where she will still receive 24-7 care from people. She'll be in an enclosure, but she will be in a natural environment, so it's important to think of it in the way it can be done because she isn't really a candidate for release.

I see. I hadn't understood that. I thought that was a kind of a starting process that she would be in a larger area with nets around, but the idea was to get her back into the wild eventually. She's in the wild. She will be in the wild in a sanctuary environment where she has natural water, seas, the weather. She's enriched by the critters that are swimming through her environment, but her family travels 125 miles a day. They travel all through the Pacific Northwest, up into Alaska waters and down into Oregon and the like, so she has no experience traveling more than in a circle in an environment. At the age of 57, and she is the second oldest of the southern resident orcas. Yes, there's a female orca who is in her late 80s, maybe 90 years old, but there are no orcas in the southern residents between the age of that whale and the age of Toki or as she's also known, Lolita. Yes, she's an older whale. She's had some physical ailments. We need to do what's responsible and right for her quality of life while giving her the experience and the quality of life that only a natural environment can provide. Will she get company? Yes, she has a companion animal she lives with now, a white-sided dolphin. Her mate died 40 years ago, so she's not been with another orca, another killer whale in more than 40 years, but she has been with white-sided dolphins and it is our intention and our hope to transport her with the white-sided dolphin that she's been living with for a number of years. How important is it to you, Charles, to see Toki big, big mammals in this category living their more natural lives as naturally as they can? Well, it's critically important. Look, we have around the world, we no longer see elephants, big cats, chimpanzees living in zoos and the like. It's basically changed. It is now changing for marine mammals. So we've done sanctuaries for other kinds of animals around

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the world. Now it's the time to do them for citations. Charles Vinic, co-founder of Friends of Toki and director of the Whale Sanctuary Project. 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 with topics

covered, you can send us an email. The address is globalpodcast@bbc.co.uk. You can also find us on Twitter at Global NewsPod. This edition was mixed by Nick Randall, the producer was Leo McCheffrey.

The editor is Karen Martin. I'm Janet Jalil. Until next time, goodbye.