

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Gaza Strip on 'edge of catastrophe' as Israeli siege intensifies

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I'm Jackie Leonard and at 13 hours GMT on Tuesday the 17th of October, these are our main stories. UN agencies have warned of a catastrophe in Gaza as fuel, water and food are within hours of running out. Belgian police have shot dead the man who murdered two Swedish football fans and India's Supreme Court has declined to allow same-sex marriages. Also in this podcast, why the appeal of building a new world is leading to record sales for one video game.

We begin this podcast in Gaza. Life-saving supplies are waiting in trucks at the border in Egypt awaiting permission to enter. There are warnings of a humanitarian disaster if aid doesn't get through soon. The population of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza has almost doubled with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fleeing from the north. The UN has warned that Israel's urging of the move without providing food or accommodation could be a war crime. Juliette Tumar, a spokeswoman for the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees, says they are providing aid where possible.

We are overwhelmed. Our supplies are dwindling and running out fast. Our staff are also very, very tired. They have been impacted themselves by the war. Many of them lost loved ones. We have sadly lost 14 staff members and these numbers continue to increase.

The BBC's Rushdie Abu Alouf is in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza, close to the Rafa crossing into Egypt. He says witnesses filmed an airstrike in the area on Monday. He spoke to us over the constant harm of drones overhead.

This airstrike is the third in the last couple of days and it targeted the road that lead to the Egyptian side of the crossing. I was given a rare access to a CCTV camera inside the terminal so I was able to see the damage. The road that access is not usable. They need to repair it. They told me they could repair it very quickly and very easily but they need an Egyptian to approve the opening of the crossing. So we have to differentiate between the crossing that allowed people, individual in and out and the terminal which is the commercial side of the crossing. I'm not aware of any damage to that property and we haven't heard any airstrike in that area. We understand there is 4,000 trucks on the Egyptian side. Not sure if they are close to the border but I was able to confirm that they were inside Al-Arij city which is about 60 kilometers to the south of Gaza. This aid convoy is really needed in Gaza. As the local authority here saying that we are at the edge of a catastrophic situation, the hospital where I stand now is called Nasser hospital. It's the main hospital in the south now providing services for 1.1 million people and they said they will shut their operation because they are going to run out of fuel and this is going to be a disaster for the city of Khanounis. I was rushed to Abu Alouf in southern Gaza. President Biden plans to visit Israel on Wednesday. His visit is being seen as a show of solidarity as Israel

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continues its war against Hamas. Yolande Nell is in Jerusalem and she told us more about what's behind the visit. This is a vital wartime solidarity visit. It's been very much welcomed by Israeli officials. Already of course we have the big show of military support at least two aircraft carriers in the region that the US has sent along with other warships to show that it's ready not just to support Israel in this ongoing effort in Gaza but also that it wants to try to stop this conflict from bordering. You know there's a lot of worry at the moment about fighting, getting worse with the powerful Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and they've been exchanged as a fire with the Israeli military just in the past few hours across the border and of course threats from Hezbollah's ally Iran which also backs both Hamas and Islamic jihad. I think for the Israelis this is coming just as it's getting ready for its escalation and its offensive against Hamas militants in Gaza so this will be almost like a way of getting a sign off from the US President. The US Secretary of State said that Mr Biden will hear from Israel how it will conduct its operations in a way that minimizes civilian casualties and it's also about dealing with the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and we're told that they're going to look at ways to enable humanitarian assistance to flow to civilians in Gaza in a way that does not benefit Hamas. That's the big concern there. There was an indication from Mr Blinken that he and the Israeli Prime Minister had agreed to develop a plan to get humanitarian aid into Gaza but he didn't provide details. There has been a lot of talk about the Israeli ground offensive. Will Mr Biden's presence be expected to affect its timing? There's going to be huge security involved in this visit even though it's just a very brief one. I mean Mr Blinken will be aware of the dangers. He had to go into a bunker at one point when he was meeting the Israeli Prime Minister because of rocket fire from Gaza and there are other complications of course in this Israeli ground offensive. We know that there are according to Israel about 200 people who are being held hostage Israelis and some dual nationals including a number of Americans and that is a big consideration too. Yolanda now in Jerusalem. More than 100 people remain unaccounted for since Hamas launched its attack on Israel from Gaza and volunteers are checking a huge area while also ensuring that any remains are collected according to strict Jewish customs. Dan Johnson has been following a team from an organisation called the 360 National Rescue Unit. I should warn you that some details in his report are upsetting. On this army base not far from Tel Aviv there is a big warehouse which is dealing with all the bodies from last week's attacks. Hundreds that have been brought here for the delicate forensic work of identification. Moshi Malayev is a medic and a volunteer. I never saw anything close to what I saw. It's been horrible. First body I took out from the truck. She was maybe five or six years old girl with the blonde hair with blue eyes with terrifying look on our face. The body was twisted. Burned bodies, deheaded bodies, parts of bodies. Horrible things. I've come with Moshi and his colleague Mayib Barel to the area of Israel close to Gaza and they've been asked to help with the continued search for the bodies of those who are missing. The army said that there is 199 people that in Gaza. And we found just 958 bodies. So like 100 missing. People was hiding in any holes or caves or anything else. We start with smelling. That people smell very strong. You've got a huge area to cover here. This is difficult, delicate work and it's going on in what's an increasingly active military zone because this is exactly where the army build up is

taking place. Why is it you guys doing this work? You're volunteers, right? Yes. It's got to do a little bit because we're religious. We feel that we do something holy, keep the bodies dignified. And we have the Jewish law. And you're determined to complete that work to give those families the answers? Absolutely. Yes. The families are broken. The family are broken. Where are we now? There was the party. The music festival. Most of the recovery work has already been done here but the guys are going through checking things like tents. Are we actually looking for blood or pieces? Organs. Body parts. Yeah. A piece of the head. They found what they think might be a piece of somebody's scalp. It does look like there's some hair. So they're just putting on a mask and gloves and collecting that up. So anything you found will be DNA tested. Yes. They'll try and match it. I hope because there is so many, so many dead. Organs. A lot. A lot of blood. Maybe the brain. Much more difficult for me to be here than being with the bodies. Really? Yes. I mean, I can see the life that has been stopped in one second. You can actually see that here. Evil needs to be eliminated from the world. I mean, I feel sorry for the innocent people who will die in Gaza. I really do because I know I see bodies here. I know what it is. But unfortunately, we don't have time to think about them. We just need to think about ourselves right now. What's the thing you've seen that you found saddest, most upsetting or has had the biggest impact on you? Children. Children. A lot of children.

Washe Malayev ending that report by Dan Johnson. Now, you might have heard the special edition that we recorded answering listeners questions on events in Israel and Gaza. The response was such that we are going to do another one. So do please send us your questions. Anything that you want explained and our correspondence will try to provide context and clarity. You know what to do. Please record us a voice message or simply write your question and email it to the usual address [globalpodcast at bbc.co.uk](mailto:globalpodcast@bbc.co.uk).

Belgian police have shot and killed a man who was wanted in connection with the murder of two Swedish football fans in Brussels on Monday evening. The 45-year-old suspect was shot and killed in a café by police on Tuesday morning. Giving details at a news conference, the Belgian Justice Minister, Vincent van Quickenbornner, said the attacker was known to the authorities and is thought to have been inspired by militant Islamists.

The suspect is a 45-year-old Tunisian who applied for asylum in our country in November 2019. He was known to the police for suspicious acts, human trafficking, illegal residents and breaches of state security. In July 2016, unconfirmed information was passed on by a foreign police service that the man had a radicalised profile and wanted to leave for a conflict zone to wage G-Head. Another person was injured in Monday night's attack ahead of the Belgium-Sweden football match in the capital. The BBC's Sophia Bettitzer, who's in Brussels, told us more about the suspect.

He was shot dead by police in Skarbek, which is a neighbourhood of Brussels where he lived. He was shot at a café, just a few streets where I'm talking to you from and this whole area has now been cordoned off and there's quite a big police presence. The police is treating this as a terrorist attack and they have raised the alert level for Brussels to fall, which is the highest level and it means that a threat could be imminent.

And just to take a step back, remind us about what happened with the shootings last night. So last night, at around 7pm, the gunman opened fire in central Brussels. He had an automatic

rifle and he shot dead two Swedish nationals. Now they were both wearing football shirts so it is very possible that they were here in Brussels for a football match that was taking place here last night. Now we have been sent videos of a man who was filming himself on a scooter speaking in Arabic and saying that he killed people in the name of God. Now we haven't verified that video but the federal prosecutors say that the man in the video is indeed the gunman and they don't know what the motive of the killing is but they believe that he was inspired by the Islamic State group and that is why they are treating this as a terrorist attack.

And just finally Sophia, what sort of reaction has there been across Europe?

So I mean this sort of attack is very unusual for a place like Brussels. The authorities have made it very clear that they don't think this is in any way related to what is happening to the Middle East but of course this comes just a few days after a man stabbed to death a teacher in France and so there is a lot of people in Europe are quite nervous at the possibility of more terror attacks.

Sophia bet it's in Brussels. To Ukraine now where tens of thousands of people have lost limbs because of land mines that Russian troops have spread over at least a third of the country. Now a Ukrainian company that once made springs for trucks has changed attack and is manufacturing attachments for boots that will help soldiers remove mines safely.

Wendy Urkut reports.

A mine exploding is probably the most frightening prospect for any soldier or civilian and during the war in Ukraine thousands of what are known as butterfly mines have been dropped across the country. Stepping on one could cause major damage to your foot and a growing number of people are losing limbs because of them. But that could be all about to change because at a factory in Ukraine more than forty 3D printers are in full swing making what are called spider boots. They're made of heavy duty plastic, have four prongs on the bottom and adjustable straps on the top similar to the attachments on skis and they fit over normal shoes or boots. The prongs elevate the foot which means the epicenter of the blast is further away. The spider boots were tested using mannequins and a hundred grams of TNT. Vadim Vochenko from the Ukrainian Spring Centre says it took a while to get it right but now in every test the foot of the mannequin survives and the sole of the spider boot remains intact. We printed five different prototypes using different plastics. Now one boot can withstand an explosion equal to 200 kilos. They're not the first spider boots ever to be made but they are the first to be manufactured in Ukraine. At four hundred dollars a pair they're not cheap but they are desperately needed.

Wendier Kurt reporting.

Still to come in this podcast. It's an art form so it has all to do with art but also being in fashion. From Adele's tuxedo nails to JLo's glazed doughnut how painting nails became a multi-billion dollar business that attracts a lot of competition.

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The Indian Supreme Court has declined to recognise same-sex marriage. The Chief Justice said laws on marriage equality were the domain of parliament. But the court asked the government to review legislation so that same-sex partners had the same benefits as married couples. A number of same-sex couples had petitioned the court arguing that not being able to marry violated their constitutional rights and made them second-class citizens. Outside the court activists had assembled to hear the judgement.

The court has given a partial judgement. It's a diplomatic judgement but I am trying to focus on the positive side that it has happened that I can finally adopt a child of my own.

So of course this is a start. A person from Peelage also can recognise that if they are from a same-sex person and they can get marriage and they can register their marriage. I have really been disappointed by the judgement because I expected same-sex marriage to get equalised but unfortunately it didn't.

A correspondent Samira Hussein was out the court in Delhi.

It was a really nuanced decision. What the court said was that they are not in a position to say that same-sex marriage rather should be legalised. That is an issue that should be left up to parliament. So they are essentially saying this is something that parliament needs to do. However all five Supreme Court justices agreed that same-sex marriage should be allowed. What they are really saying here is that look there are so many material benefits that married couples get like tax benefits and pension benefits that they are being discriminated against because they are not able to enter into a marital union. They can't get those benefits. So what they have tasked the government to do is to go back and figure out ways to make sure that they are not discriminated against because they are not allowed to get married. And what sort of reaction has there been from those who have been pressing for same-sex marriage? What next for them?

Well it is interesting. I am actually outside the Supreme Court and there were many activists that had gathered here to listen to the verdict and you just saw clumps of people huddled around a cell phone to listen to the live stream of the verdict and as it became more and more clear you can sense that sort of the atmosphere sort of became a lot more quiet. It just seemed that people were deflated, disappointed again that the court had decided that it can't adjudicate in this matter.

As you say though it was a fairly nuanced judgement. How much of a hot topic has this actually been in India? What have people been saying about it?

Well it is certainly a topic of massive amounts of importance to the tens of millions of LGBTQ people here in this country. Now remember India in 2018 actually decriminalised gay sex which was seen as a big move for the country. This was sort of the next logical step for activists to have same-sex marriages recognised. And so it is a topic of great importance for so many people especially young people in this country.

Samira Hussein in Delhi.

The Amazon rainforest is experiencing one of its worst droughts on record. On Monday the Amazon River was recorded at its lowest level in more than a century. At one point of the river in Manaus, the region's most populous city, the water level is four metres lower than this time last year and it's causing huge problems for people living there. Professor Lorenzo Pellegrini from the International Institute of Social Studies in the Netherlands

has been studying deforestation in the Amazon.

There are several effects here that probably are playing a role. So there is global climate change of course that makes these events more likely and then there is local climate change. And of course the drought also makes it more possible, more likely to have yet more deforestation because these are conditions that are perfect for wildfires. This is a part of a chain of events that have definitely consequences at the global level. We have seen wildlife and dangerous species victims of this. For example the pink river dolphin which is one of those emblematic mammals that are endangered in the Amazon, but of course there is much, much more. There is so much biodiversity that we don't know even most of the species that are there. The Amazon basin of course is the way transportation takes place there, but of course it's also the source of water for local communities, especially in rural areas.

So the water there is really the way transportation takes place, but also fundamental for the livelihood of the local communities. For example if they run out of clean sources of water they will use water that is much less clean and if they run out also of gas they will not be able for example to boil their water. So these are then also quite dangerous situations also for human health. Professor Lorenzo Pellegrini. Microplastics are a growing concern for governments around the world and now the European Commission is stepping up its attempts to tackle microplastic pollution. Under new rules products that are deliberately made with microplastics are banned, but that's not all. They also want companies to check for possible leaks when making things with microplastic pellets. Here's the BBC's Katie Silver.

So these are called noodles. They basically act like the building blocks for most of the world's plastic production. They go into everything from car bumpers, office chairs, water bottles, salad bowls, you name it. But the problem is they leak into the environment at every step of the supply chain. So the commission estimates that there's between 52,000 and 184,000

tons of plastic pellets that are leaked into the environment in the EU each year. So they're hoping to introduce a number of tougher rules for companies that use the tiny materials. These companies are going to need to conduct risk assessments to make sure that they don't do any spillage and if they do the measures that they can take once this happens larger companies are going to need these plans verified by independent operators and they can face sanctions for violations. Katie Silver. Manicures and nail art are very big business. The industry's worth more than \$20 billion globally. Nowadays it's fueled by social media where people share their designs. Over the past two days hundreds of technicians from more than 30 countries have been taking this to the next level attending the world's biggest nail art competition known as Nailimpia here in London. Our reporter Nikki Cardwell went along. I'm looking at one of the finished entries for this year's Nailimpia. Each individual nail is beautifully painted and detailed. When the model's fingers are held together they make up an amazingly complex design.

All the entries have to be properly applied to the model's hand and be structurally sound as well as beautiful. Anna Kovandassar from the Netherlands is the competition's chief judge. She thinks the appeal is that these spectacular designs can be worn by anyone. It's an art form but it's also becoming like an accessory for the end user because she wants to have her nails painted or coloured or she's going to a special party. So it has all to do with art but also being in fashion. I think there is not one woman who doesn't wear any colour on her nails.

Mexico's Ismael Camero won the fantasy category with a huge 3D day of the dead design.

Would you like to see some of your work in a big museum somewhere?

You haven't think about it but it's endless possibilities. With the Chinese nail market worth nearly two billion pounds a year alone next year Nailimpia will be going to China for the first time. The organisers are anticipating that it will be their biggest event yet with the promise of 500 local competitors on top of those from the rest of the world. Nikki Cardwell and we end this podcast on a record breaker as Minecraft the highest selling game of all time becomes the first video game to sell 300 million copies. So what's the appeal? In essence it's all about building a virtual world. That's what that is that's building a virtual world. Peter Goffin told Alex Ritz and more about why Minecraft keeps outselling any other game by such a huge margin. The makers of Minecraft a Swedish company called Mojang Studios announced this achievement at the

weekend that the game has sold 300 million copies since its release 14 years ago. Now as you mentioned

Minecraft is already the highest selling video game of all time by a long shot. Grand Theft Auto 5 is a distant second having sold 185 million copies over the past 10 years. So what makes Minecraft so popular? Well at its most basic it's about using blocks to build things a bit like digital Lego except you can't really run out of blocks and you can't run out of space so you can create cities, mountains, entire landscapes and interact with players online. It's challenging enough for adults but it's also become known especially as a game that a lot of parents are happy for their children to play because it's an outlet for creativity and strategy and unlike Grand Theft Auto for instance Minecraft is not based around violence or mature themes. Yeah it's incredible 300 million

copies of Minecraft sold that really says something about the whole strength of the industry doesn't it? It does and I don't want to burst Minecraft's bubble but it's not even the biggest video game brand out there. It's sold the most for a single standalone game but Tetris the puzzle game that came out in the 1980s has sold more than 500 million copies of its various versions and my favorite my generation's favorite the Mario franchise maybe the best known video game of all time has sold more than 800 million copies of its games. It's become a bona fide cultural phenomenon.

As is Peter Goffin and that's it from us for now but there will be a new edition of the Global News podcast later if you would like to comment on this edition or the topics covered in it do please send us an email the address is globalpodcast.bbc.co.uk you can also find us on ex formally known as Twitter at Global News Pod this edition was mixed by Joe McCartney the producer was Stephanie

Prentice our editor is Karen Martin I'm Jackie Leonard and until next time goodbye.

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