

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Hamas officials: "750 Palestinians killed in last 24 hours"

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

I'm Charlotte Gallagher and at 13 hours GMT on Wednesday the 25th of October, these are our main stories. The main UN agency in the Gaza Strip has said it's sheltering nearly 600,000 people in its facilities. It's warned that fuel supplies are running out and it won't be able to provide support after tonight. Israel says it will deny UN officials visas in response to remarks from the UN Secretary General.

Also in this podcast, a powerful hurricane described as potentially catastrophic has made landfall on Mexico's Pacific coast and

the U.S. actor Richard Roundtree, whose leading role in the Shaft film franchise is considered to be a turning point for African American actors, has died at his home in Los Angeles.

We start the podcast in Gaza, where Hamas say more than 750 Palestinians, including 344 children, have been killed in Israeli airstrikes over the past 24 hours.

The casualty figures have been rising sharply in the past few days.

International calls are growing for a humanitarian pause in Gaza after UN aid workers said they wouldn't be able to provide support past Wednesday without fuel deliveries.

The UN agency, Palestinian refugees, has warned its shelters in the Gaza Strip are overwhelmed with displaced people seeking refuge.

It said the facilities were holding 600,000 Palestinians

four times their capacity, but many were still having to sleep in the streets.

Israel, for its part, says fuel deliveries could fall into the hands of Hamas, which many Western governments classify as a terrorist organization.

Our correspondent, Rushdie Abu Alouf, sent this report from Khan Yunus in the south of the Gaza Strip.

The maximum pressure, as they said, they will shut all the operation within 24 hours, not only the UN, the largest aid agency in Gaza, but also the local authority here, which manage hospitals and manage other facilities in Gaza.

They said fuel without fuel, everything will be shut.

Imagine this hospital now is the main medical center for almost half of Gaza's population, and it will be stopped soon.

They are still struggling to find some sort of fuel.

They buy it from local companies.

They buy it if it's available in some petrol station to keep only the emergency room of the hospital working and going.

Most of the other departments in the hospital were shut

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because they want to minimize the amount of fuel that they spend.
You know, they are buying time.
They just focus on the saving life mission.
So people who are just having kidney dialysis, they won't be able to do it.
So very catastrophic situation in this hospital and in other hospitals.
Nick Robinson spoke to one former resident of Gaza City,
Najla Shahwar, who works for Oxfam and relocated to the south of the Gaza Strip.
She and her two daughters now live in a house which is home to 57 people.
So what is life like and has relocating made her feel safer?
Not at all, I wish.
You know, the past nights have been really difficult.
There has been continuous tank shelling.
Now, as I'm speaking, there is distant bombing.
During the day, there are airstrikes.
At night, we manage to sleep, but we sleep and wake up, sleep and wake up,
and like every maybe 20 minutes or so.
Sometimes it becomes closer, so we go all hide in the room
because I sleep in the car outside.
The inside is limited.
At the end of the day, we're 57.
And the priority is for the elderly and the little kids.
We just keep on moving and shuffling.
Sometimes we take shifts.
You take shifts to sleep because there isn't room?
Absolutely, yes.
In the beginning, we had no mattresses, but now we have some,
but we have no room to put them.
But we are unfortunately getting used to very little sleep
because it's very terrifying at night.
It's horrible, but you can also realize that,
okay, it's not on top of me yet.
That's exactly what I keep on telling myself.
What do you tell your children?
You've got two daughters, nine and six.
What do you say to them?
Do they know what's happening?
Unfortunately, they know more than they should at such age.
Sometimes they just start crying.
Are we going to go back?
The older one realizes that it's long term
and she just goes into like difficult, difficult mode
where she just can't express it anymore
or she just starts crying.

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They are distracted by the many people that are here.
I can hear happy sounds of children in the background.
They manage to play, do they?
They manage to have some time away from the horror of it.
They do, they do.
It's very strange, but they do.
Children manage to do things really in an amazing way.
They play, they sing together.
We had some notebooks and papers.
They managed to draw stuff.
They even organized themselves
and do some classroom kind of activity.
And when it really hits hard, they just kind of come closer
and they look at the sky.
They watch where the smoke is.
And what about food?
So food, it differs from place to another
because some shops were actually physically damaged.
But there are still basic supplies running.
The problem is cooking gas.
It's very limited.
We had two days of very limited or no bread.
We did some baking, but we had not enough wood to have fire.
We found a nice lady who agreed to take some flour
and bake for us the big batch.
And we celebrated the bread yesterday.
It was like a feast.
So everyone had nice sandwiches.
How much power have you got in the moment?
Zero from the grid since, I don't know,
14, 15, how many days have we been?
Yeah, since the beginning of it.
So we are totally dependent on our solar panel.
We have one refrigerator on to keep it during the day.
But the batteries are also not in the best shape.
Natala Shawa in Gaza.
The suffering of civilians in Gaza
is increasing calls for at least a lull
in the Israeli military operation
to allow more humanitarian aid to enter Gaza.
Our correspondent in Jerusalem, Yolan Nel,
told me that pressure on Israel to allow in fuel isn't letting up.
It's not. And there's been these warnings now for days

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that the fuel is being cut off,
that it was needed for hospitals
in order to run their generators,
but also for other essential equipment,
for water desalination plants,
water filtration and pumps and sewage water treatment.
And it's just got more and more desperate,
of course, the humanitarian situation in Gaza.
We've still not seen any fuel going in.
And even after Umrah,
which is the biggest Palestinian agency
operating in the Gaza Strip,
put out this message saying
it was going to have to stop its humanitarian operation
because it reserves a fuel running down to the last drops,
then the Israeli military actually
reposted that on its social media feeds
and said, you know,
ask Hamas if you can have some of its fuel.
It published a satellite image of storage tanks,
which it said contained 500,000 litres of fuel
belonging to Hamas.
There's also a lot of talk from the US and other countries
about perhaps a lull, a pause in the fighting
to help civilians in Gaza.
I mean, how likely is that?
I mean, international pressure is definitely building
for something like that,
because while Israel has been able to dismiss
and has had US backing for dismissing
some of the international calls
there have been for a complete ceasefire,
they've come from the UN Secretary General,
they've come from Russia and from Arab countries.
Now we have had the US commenting that perhaps, you know,
as Israel must take all possible precautions
to avoid harm to civilians
in accordance with international law,
that could mean that humanitarian pauses
should be considered
to let in essential humanitarian assistance
and get it to those who need it.
It's a new message that's coming from the US,

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which of course is Israel's closest ally.
And we've also seen a row break out between Israel and the UN Secretary General.
That's right.
And it's a row that's really been escalating through the day.
So at the UN, just to remind people, the Secretary General Antonio Guterres, he first of all talked about how there are violations of international law by both sides.
When it came to Hamas using civilians as human shields, he said, when it came to Israel's bombardment, he said that there was the fundamental principle of respecting and protecting civilians.
But then he went on to say, it's important to also recognize the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum.
And he described how the Palestinian people he said have been subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation, gave more details of the historical conflict over decades.
Israel reacted extremely angrily to this.
It called on Antonio Guterres to resign immediately, saying he'd lost all morality and impartiality.
And now there are calls for visas to be cancelled for UN officials wanting to come to Israel.
Yola Naal in Jerusalem.
And we heard there that Israel has pushed back strongly against those comments.
Mark Regev is a senior advisor to Israel's prime minister. Speaking to the BBC, he accused the UN chief of bias.
Well, the United Nations has to show itself to be a reasonable partner here.
And we've in the past worked with Secretary-General's and worked with the UN effectively on numerous issues.
But I'd remind you that two of the current Secretary-General's predecessors, both Kofi Annan and Ban Ki-moon, publicly addressed the issue of institutional structural anti-Israel bias in the UN.
This Secretary-General has not done so.
He seems to have adopted and embraced that structural and organizational bias against my country.

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Dennis Ross was a US envoy to the Middle East for 12 years.
He spoke to my colleague, Justin Webb,
about the UN Secretary-General's comments
and a warning the content is distressing from the start.
It really is problematic at one level.
I mean, it sounds like you're trying to say that
this didn't occur out of nowhere.
But the fact is, you go and you cut a baby out of a pregnant woman.
You kill the kids in front of the parents and vice versa.
You burn a mother and a child together.
There is nothing that justifies that.
And there shouldn't be any effort to try to qualify it or say,
well, let's understand that this didn't just appear out of the ether.
It's not desperation that produces that.
That's just behavior that is completely unacceptable
and should be seen as completely illegitimate.
And I think there should have been a straight condemnation
without trying to qualify it in any way.
And what many Israelis will say
is that this is part of a pattern of the way they are treated,
the way they're approached by the UN as an organization.
Well, I think there is a sense on the Israeli side
that there is a legacy here and they see that frequently.
So it does raise questions in their mind
about when the UN approaches them.
And obviously, you look at things like the UN Human Rights Council
where you have some of the worst human rights abusers on the council itself
and most of the resolutions are related to Israel.
So it does create from their standpoint a sense
that when it comes to the UN, they will never get a fair shake.
In the meantime, these hostages are still in desperate circumstances
and the world looks on.
What do you think behind the scenes can be achieved
before a military action by Israel
that might result in the hostages dying?
The key is, is Qatar able to have meaningful influence with Hamas?
I mean, after all, you have political leaders of Hamas
that are allowed to stay in Qatar.
Allowed to have a platform in Qatar.
And I think the administration has basically been saying to them,
you're trying to convince us that it's good for you to have a relationship with Hamas.
We need to see some indication that it actually produces something.
We have seen four hostages released out of 222.

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So I think if you're going to see any real delay with the Israelis, a further delay on the issue of them coming in on the ground, you're going to have to see a much larger release of hostages than we've seen so far. That was Dennis Ross speaking to my colleague Justin Webb.

Away from the conflict in the Middle East now and in a historic ruling, Japan's Supreme Court has declared that a law requiring the removal of reproductive organs in order to change gender legally is unconstitutional.

The court's decision was prompted by a transgender woman who was born a man and didn't want to undergo sterilization.

Japan is one of 18 countries that requires such surgery, a position opposed by the World Health Organization.

Our correspondent in Tokyo, Shima Halil, told me what impact this change will have. It's quite a significant ruling by the Supreme Court really, because for the first time since this law has been put in place about 20 years ago, Japan's top court has decided that the sterilization surgery requirement is unconstitutional for someone under Japan's gender identity disorder law.

A person can legally change their gender if a number of conditions are met, including the most stark one is undergoing surgery to remove their reproductive organs. What today's ruling means is that they don't have to go to sterilization surgery.

And today, the country's Supreme Court ruled in favor of a transgender woman who challenged the law with her lawyer arguing that her reproductive ability has already been diminished significantly by years of hormone therapy, but also adding that forcing someone to go into surgery could entail physical suffering and the risk of after effects.

So it means a significant change for a number of people who want to legally change their gender, but don't necessarily want to go through that surgery.

And Japan is a socially conservative country.

So what kind of challenges do people face who want to change their gender?

It really is a big challenge.

Look, LGBTQ support groups have long said that this law has failed to match the reality of the transgender community.

And what's interesting is that you see this growing support for LGBT issues.

And yet you face opposition from the country's conservative circles, be that conservative politicians or conservative groups.

So for example, for the last few weeks, you've had opposing groups, including Save Women's Space, who've collected thousands and thousands of signatures asking the Supreme Court to deem that law constitutional, which of course now it hasn't.

But their argument is that if transgender people don't undergo surgery, women won't feel safe and it will be legally confusing.

So it is still quite controversial.

Remember, this is the only G7 country that hasn't legalized same-sex marriage.

So it's still quite an issue.

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Even if this ruling today is seen as a big legal win for the transgender community here.

A powerful storm has hit southern Mexico.

Hurricane Otis developed rapidly, becoming a Category 5 hurricane, as it made landfall near the resort city of Acapulco.

As we record this podcast, it has lowered in intensity to a Category 4, as it spreads inland.

But the US National Hurricane Agency is still describing it as life-threatening.

Vanessa Bush-Luter, our online Latin America and Caribbean editor, has been following developments.

We're getting in reports from people in Acapulco who are saying that it feels like a tremor.

It feels like an earthquake rather than a storm.

And there's footage making the rounds on social media of people in a hospital where the windows have been blown in by the force of the winds.

And they're holding the beds down.

They're holding on to the railings and just to resist the force of that wind.

A lot of the damage was caused overnight.

This was a storm that developed so rapidly that the normal warning systems that are in place weren't alerted.

So a lot of people will have been caught by this by surprise.

And what about now?

Are people managing to get into shelters?

Or is there still fears that some people are really exposed?

Yes, people are making their ways into shelters where they can.

But of course sometimes it is more dangerous to then leave the place that you are and go somewhere when the winds are already at this strength.

Normally what would happen is that a storm like this would develop over water and you'd have hours, days sometimes of the storm strengthening slowly and people could board up their windows and seek shelter.

But that didn't happen this time and that's why it's so dangerous.

That was Vanessa Bush-Luter.

The Australian city of Sydney is reviewing plaques on statues linked to the country's colonial past. After concerns are raised they could be ignoring historical atrocities.

From Sydney, Phil Mercer reports.

Sydney has 25 government funded statues of Australia's early colonial leaders.

Yvonne Weldon, the city's first Aboriginal councillor,

believes many of their inscriptions are inaccurate, misleading and offensive.

A statue of the British explorer Captain James Cook declares that he discovered Australia in 1770.

However, Indigenous history dates back up to 65,000 years.

The review won't look at replacing the monuments,

only whether their plaque should be amended to reflect Australia's complicated and at times brutal colonisation.

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That was Phil Mercer in Sydney.

Coming up, new research suggests ultra-processed foods can trigger addictive behaviours comparable to consuming alcohol or tobacco.

But when we look at the amount of early death and disease associated with excessive intake of these ultra-processed foods, it's really on par with our most deadly addictive drugs, which are cigarettes.

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Let's turn to the US now, where the government has been paralyzed since the Speaker of the House of Representatives was ousted earlier this month.

Three Republicans have now tried and failed to get the top job, with the party struggling to unite behind one person.

The latest candidate, Tom Emma, dropped out of the race just hours after being nominated, as our correspondent, Anthony Zercher, told Alex Ritzen.

and said that it would be a tragic mistake if Republicans backed him for Speaker, said that he was a globalist and didn't really support him.

And a handful of Republicans came out of the House of Representatives, said that they were going to block his nomination, his candidacy, and he pulled out.

It was a very quick process, but Tom Emma, Speaker Designate for an hour, and then now they're back to the drawing board trying to find who might be able to cobble together that 217 votes in the House of Representatives to be elected Speaker.

So it was Donald Trump's description of him as a rhino, a Republican in name only that did for him?

It certainly opened the doors to a sizable number of Republicans in the House to object to him.

Now, there is no guarantee that even if Donald Trump had kept his mouth closed, that Emma would have been able to win, but it accelerated it considerably.

So what next? When will there be a Speaker? What route is there to a Speaker?

And what's America making of this?

Well, it's been three weeks now. And what next is that Republicans are going back to the drawing board? You know, I think the American public, this isn't directly affecting their lives right now.

This is a political drama. This is certainly a Washington drama. It's an embarrassment for Republicans, but it's not having any kind of real world impact on American voters yet.

When it might start to have that happen is if they can't get a Speaker seated before the middle

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of November and the government shuts down and Americans will be inconvenienced, some Americans

will feel very distinct pain from not having government services. And then I think they'll start looking for whom to blame and the Republicans being the obvious target. But the clock is ticking

towards there and the longer this drags out, the more chance that that government shutdown will happen. Anthony Zercher staying in the United States and an off-duty pilot who's accused of trying to crash a plane has pleaded not guilty to 83 charges of attempted murder. Joseph Emerson was sitting in the cockpit of an Alaska Airlines flight on Sunday when he allegedly tried to overpower the captain and disable the engine. Our correspondent Peter Bose is following the case. Joseph Emerson is facing a whole raft of charges. It is an extraordinary story. 83 counts of attempted murder, one for each person on board, 83 counts of reckless endangerment, one count of endangering

an aircraft. And through his lawyer, he's pleaded not guilty, at an initial court appearance in Portland. There will no doubt be many more to come, including an appearance in federal court to face charges of interfering with flight crew members and attendants. Now, just to recap what happened, there's been a long sequence of events here. He was traveling in the jump seat in the cockpit of this plane. That's the seat just behind the flight's captain and first officer.

And it seems this is a situation that is allowed that pilots from other airlines, in this case a partner airline, are allowed to use these seats. Very few other crew members are authorized to do so.

So it was from within the cockpit that he allegedly made an attempt to cut off the engines. He was unsuccessful. There was a brief struggle. He was eventually handcuffed to a seat at the back of the plane. And it was later when he was interviewed by the police that he said he'd taken psychedelic mushrooms, seemingly for the first time, and that he thought he was having a nervous breakdown. And he also said that he hadn't slept for 40 hours. It is just extraordinary, his idea that he had taken psychedelic mushrooms before being allowed in the cockpit of a plane. How can this have happened?

Well, that is a huge question. And I think it is that issue that is concerning so many people. Now, it is a fact that pilots during the course of their careers are required to undergo regular medical examinations to report all the medications they're taking to answer questions about their mental health. They're seen by aviation medical examiners. And these people are trained to spot potential problems and their protocols to evaluate whether a condition requires treatment, whether they preclude someone from doing their job. And this is a process that goes on throughout the career of a pilot. So clearly questions are being asked about the very specific details in this case, how apparently no warning signs of a potential problem were spotted, which is a particular

concern of the traveling public in this country, especially at a time when US aviation is facing so many questions related to safety, including a different topic. But there are many concerns here about near misses. Peter Bowes. New research suggests ultra processed foods like cakes, crisps and processed meats can trigger addictive behaviors comparable to consuming alcohol or tobacco. Extra sugar, fat and salt is often added to the refined products. The study is by a group of researchers from Michigan University who analyzed more than 280 studies from 36 countries.

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Professor

Ashley Gearhart is the lead researcher of the study. The most deadly addictive drug out there is tobacco. It kills more people every year than alcohol and cocaine and heroin combined. So when we look at the amount of early death and disease associated with excessive intake of these ultra processed foods, it's really on par with our most deadly addictive drugs, which are cigarettes. Countries like the United Kingdom, the United States that have environments that are particularly highly dominated by ultra processed foods, where that's maybe half of your food supply, are those where we're seeing kind of higher levels of this addictive pattern of intake. Some of the more Mediterranean countries, countries like Italy, where they have less ultra processed foods and their food supply, we think that the levels of endorsement are often lower. And one of the spots that I am really concerned is actually developing countries that are going through this really rapid nutrition transition right now. And as we're seeing those ultra processed foods start to dominate, we're seeing that the loss of control, the diet related disease, the inability to cut down is coming along with it. So it's going to be a growing problem in many developing countries unless we step in and do something. That was Ashley Gearhart. Since the October 7th attacks by Hamas

out of Gaza, the other Palestinian territory, the West Bank, has been mostly out of the headlines. But it's been even more tense than usual. Four more Palestinians were killed in Israeli raids overnight, bringing the total number of West Bank Palestinians killed since the 7th of October to around 100. The West Bank is roughly between Jerusalem and the River Jordan, and Israel has settled hundreds of thousands of Jews there illegally under international law, though it disputes this. Our international editor Jeremy Bowen has been touring the area. His report starts in a remote and hard line settlement of highly religious Jewish nationalists. Does anybody live here permanently? There's a few families living here in these caravans and huts, and there's one bachelor who lives in this specific place where we are now. And what about the neighbors? What about the Palestinians here?

So he's just walking across the hilltop. He's got bits of broken metal and smashed up cars. He's got a what looks like an 18-inch machete and a leather scabbard. His colleague here has got a large pistol. So we've stopped on the edge of the hilltop and we're looking down to an extensive network of Palestinian villages. There's few farms and terracing. When you see this view, what does it say to you? Well, I see our troubles, our enemies. The Palestinians? Yeah. Why can't you live with them peacefully? Do you live in peace with somebody just trying to kill you for 50 years? You both got weapons. I mean, why is it necessary to have those things? Is it that dangerous here for you? At the moment, we're using these weapons for self-defense, but we hope soon

that it will be for attacking. Whoever's not holding a weapon, in my opinion, is untrue to himself in this time of war between Israel and the Ismailites, the Arabs. Israeli nighttime raids to arrest people are very, very common in the West Bank and they've been stepped up since this emergency started. With the arrests, always comes a military operation and often quite a bit of violence. So where we're heading now is on the edge of Ramallah. There's a refugee camp called Jala Zun where two people were killed during an arrest operation and they're being buried. In the funeral procession, hundreds and hundreds of most of the young men walking behind the two bodies, many flags of different Palestinian organizations, Fatih the dominant

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faction in the West Bank, also Hamas, and Palestinian national flags.

A small group of women, relatives of the dead, were standing at the back of the big crowd of men and boys who come to mourn and show some defiance. With them was Haitham Arar, a member of the revolutionary council of Fatih, who works at the Human Rights Unit at the Ministry of the Interior. The word must pay attention that the Israelis, they shoot the people directly and to the heads. So this is the message that the Israelis, they are announcing war not just only in Gaza but everywhere in the Palestinian land. What did you think when you heard Hamas had attacked Israel and killed all those people? I will not answer this. The message that comes from particular allies of Israel, from the Americans, from the British and so on, is that it's not a war against the Palestinian people, it's a war against Hamas. But at times like this, distinctions like that don't matter much.

That was Jeremy Bowen in the West Bank. And we finish the podcast with the news of the death of Richard Roundtree, the American actor best known for his starring role as Detective John Shaft in the Shaft film franchise. He died at his home in Los Angeles from pancreatic cancer. He was 81. Judy Frankel looks back at his life.

With its Oscar winning theme song by Isaac Hayes, John Shaft, the super cool and street wise New York detective with his broad moustache and trademark brown leather coat, made Richard Roundtree a star. He was dubbed the first black action hero and became one of the faces of the 1970s black exploitation movement, a genre of action film primarily aimed at an urban African American audience. The film, which came out in 1971, was originally conceived to be fronted by a white actor. But the director, Gordon Parks, insisted on casting Roundtree, saying he was the most sophisticated, smooth person he'd ever met. Roundtree was just 28 at the time

and had been working as a model before joining a black theater company.

He went on to make two Shaft sequels and appeared in dozens of other films and TV series, including Roots, the 1977 landmark show about the history of slavery.

Roundtree reprised his role as Shaft in a 2000 film of the same name, starring Samuel L. Jackson as his nephew, as well as a Netflix film in 2019 that continued the franchise. Samuel L. Jackson was one of the first to pay tribute on social media, saying his death left a deep hole in his heart.

That was Judy Frankel, looking back at the life of Richard Roundtree.

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 X, formerly known as Twitter, at Global NewsPod. This edition was produced by Alice Adley and was mixed by Gabriel O'Regan. The editor is Karen Martin. I'm Charlotte Gallagher. Until next time. Goodbye.