

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Hawaii wildfires 'deadliest in modern US history'

Hello, this is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service, with reports and analysis from across the world. The latest news seven days a week. BBC World Service podcasts are supported by advertising. You're listening to the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service. Hello, I'm Oliver Conway. This edition is published in the early hours of Monday, the 14th of August. People in the US state of Hawaii appeal for more government help as they struggle to recover from deadly wildfires. Ukraine says Russia's navy breached international law when it held up a Black Sea cargo ship. And Iran's parliament votes to avoid a public debate over a new law on enforcing hijab wearing. Also in the podcast, the Ku leaders in Niger tell visiting delegates they remain open to diplomacy and the English literature course on the lyrics of Taylor Swift. The governor of the US state of Hawaii says the burnt out tourist town of Lahaina is like a war zone after it was all but destroyed by fire. The cost of rebuilding has been put at five and a half billion dollars. And people on the island of Maui are calling for more government help. The flames are now largely under control, but thousands have been left homeless and people are still missing. Our correspondent Sophie Long reports from the scene. The road to Lahaina is packed with people desperate to reach their homes. Some want to search for missing loved ones. Others are trying to bring supplies to friends and family left stranded without fuel or power or water. President Biden promised immediate help to those who survived, but many islanders say it's not yet reaching those most in need. Felicia Johnson McKenzie has turned her t-shirt business into a drop off and delivery depot for aid, but she's been stopped from entering the devastated area. I'm frustrated. I am. We're one family. We need to take care of each other. They're traumatized. They're upset. No one's giving hugs. Do you hear people in the same past? It's a fire on Thursday. Kids in the same diapers since Thursday. People would out food. Felicia's extended family and friends help her load cars, trucks and trailers. They share her frustration, not just with access, but with attitude. It's almost like there are two Hawai'i's. There is two Hawai'i's right now. There is the Hawai'i we're living in and the Hawai'i they're living in. They're visiting in. Her daughter, Kaleika Marca Johnson, is a medical student and works in a restaurant, often serving tourists. Our people just died in three days ago, are the same waters the very next day these visitors, tourists, were swimming in. And that says a lot about where their heart and mind is through all of this and where our heart and mind is. You don't see our people swimming, snorkeling, surfing. Nobody is having fun in tragedy. How long have you been waiting here? We heard that it was going to open when we were shopping. On the road to Lahaina, as people continue to wait, frustration is building. From between noon and four, we've been stuck over here. What do you think about the level of information you've been getting from the authorities? Extremely poor. Anybody that has a truck full of items should be able to access residents that need it. You know, we're talking still about lives here. People need water. They need food. I'm worried about that water up there. The thoughts of people around the world with those affected by this tragedy, there have been pleasures of many hundreds of millions to help them rebuild. But people here, like Kaleika Marca, say they'll get through it by supporting each other. My family lost everything. My best friend in this whole world lost everything. Gee, who's standing right there. She's lost everything. She has no house, no car,

no passport, no money. She is. And how are we coping with each other?
That's all we can do. We can't do this alone. People who are alone right now in Lahaina, they're lost. Like my mom said, they're just, they're not even looking at the ocean. They're not looking at the mountain or the sky. They're just staring at the ground. We all hurt for our own people who have nothing.
That report by Sophie Long. At least 93 people died in the fires, making them the deadliest in America in more than a century. But the authorities are warning that that figure is likely to rise, as I heard from John Sudworth in Maui. Police forensic teams are still searching the charred ruins of the homes and businesses inside Lahaina. And we know that they have really so far only covered a tiny fraction of those damaged and destroyed properties. So the death toll is expected to rise. The authorities have been very clear about that from the start. Meanwhile though, Ollie, there are these other questions from many residents here in Maui about the adequacy of the US government relief effort, whether enough is being done to get help to those people still inside the disaster zone. And also other questions about what happens going forward. This island now faces a huge homeless crisis. Thousands of people left without homes as a result. Big questions about what's going to be done with them. Now, we've heard some people in Lahaina unhappy at tourists carrying on their holidays in the area. But I guess tourism is an important part of the economy there. What will it be like going forward?
I think it's a really interesting question, that one. And it's a really difficult and complicated one. We are looking now at a major humanitarian crisis here. But as you say, inside an economy, which is almost totally dependent on tourism and the inflow of thousands of people every year to enjoy this stunning coastline. And that will present in the face of a homelessness crisis, in the face of the huge suffering here. Really difficult, practical, political, and even moral questions going forward. There are no easy answers to that question. Ukraine has accused Russia of carrying out an act of piracy in the Black Sea after a Russian warship opened fire on a cargo vessel off the coast of Turkey. The Sokru Okan had left a Turkish port on Saturday and was heading north towards Ukraine when it was intercepted. The Russians fired warning shots and then boarded the cargo ship with a helicopter before inspecting it and allowing it on its way. It is the first such incident since Russia withdrew from a UN-backed deal allowing safe passage for Ukrainian grain exports. Our Europe regional editor, Danny Eberhard, told us more.

Well, Russia has already attacked a Ukrainian port infrastructure since pulling out of the grain deal.

It hit civilian ships in places like Odessa, Chornomorsk, the big sea ports.

It's also struck the port of Ismail,

which is thought to be the point of destination of this ship.

But the fact that it's the first time that it's targeted a civilian vessel heading for Ukraine, I think, is significant.

Now, Ukraine's infrastructure minister has accused the Russians of trying to intimidate commercial shipping and all this feeds into the wider picture of tensions in the Black Sea, Oli,

and fears for exports of things like foodstuffs, but also other commodities.

Yeah, because this wasn't a Ukrainian vessel.

Do we know who was operating it?

Well, the vessel itself was flagged from Palau,

but that seems to be a flag of convenience.

Its home port is Istanbul, the Turkish biggest city,

and the name of the ship is a Turkish name.

So I think it wouldn't be unreasonable to assume that there's a strong Turkish connection here.

And Turkey, obviously, are keen to investigate the incident.

We're not quite sure exactly how far off the Turkish coast this took place,

but that's one of the things that the Turks will be looking into.

Yeah, I mean, that could have problems for relations between Turkey and Russia,

which have been quite important during the Ukraine war.

They are.

So President Erdogan, of course, played an important role in brokering the Black Sea grain deal in the first place.

Ukraine has been trying to keep this back at some sort of exports going.

Ismail, which is the port we think the ship was heading for,

is the biggest alternative port for Ukraine,

but it's much smaller than the big sea ports.

So it's of importance.

What we know is that the Russians seem to have thought there was no prohibited materials on board, i.e. military supplies.

Ah, you're a regional editor, Danny Eberhardt.

Voting has ended in Argentina in a primary election

seen as a kind of dress rehearsal for the presidential poll later this year.

Candidates need to get more than one and a half percent of the vote in order to progress.

But since every adult in the country is required to cast a ballot,

the primary gives a good indication of who will do well in the election proper.

However, the Argentine economy is in dire straits,

and many people are already disillusioned with politicians.

I asked the BBC's Veronica Smink in Buenos Aires

to tell us who to look out for in the primary poll,

starting with the two main political blocs.

In the last 20 years, Argentina has seen basically a political battle between the leftist peronist coalition led by former President Cristina Kirchner and the center right together for change, coalition led by the president who succeeded Kirchner Mauricio Macri. The interesting thing about this election, it's the first one without either one. So these coalitions are battling out again but without their main leaders. The other thing is, as you said, till now primaries here were like a dress rehearsal because basically coalitions had decided who they were going to present and there was just the one candidate. So it was basically like a big national poll. This time, though, most candidates actually are going to compete against someone. So there is a lot of uncertainty this time around. But you will get an indication, I guess, from the blocks, even if they have more than one candidate, about who might be in front ahead of the main election later this year. But there's also a surprise candidate who could come through the middle. Someone who's been described as more in the mold of Donald Trump or Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro. That's right. Libertarian economist Javier Millay is the other big uncertainty of these primaries. So the main peronist coalition has Sergio Massa, the current economy minister, as the main candidate. The opposition center right coalition is battling out between a former security minister, Patricia Burrit, and the current mayor of Buenos Aires, Horacio Rodriguez Larreta. So we're waiting to see what happens there. But the big uncertainty is this far right candidate, Javier Millay, who, according to polls, might get even 20% of the vote or more. So really, this is the first time that these primaries, nobody knows what to expect. Yeah, and it'll be interesting to see those candidates who do well, how they intend to deal with Argentina's many, many problems. Yes, 116% inflation. The peso has plummeted. It's one of the most evaluated currencies in the world, and the second in Latin America after the Venezuelan Bolívar. Four out of 10 people are poor. And there's this massive 44 billion debt with the IMF. So whoever comes in is going to have really, really hard challenges ahead. Veronica Smink in the Argentine capital, Buenos Aires. The Iranian parliament has voted to avoid a public debate on a major new law on the hijab. Instead, it will be reviewed behind closed doors. The so-called hijab and chastity bill is intended to ensure compliance with the wearing of the hijab by women in response to months of mass protests, triggered by the death of a young woman in the custody of the morality police.

Our Middle East analyst, Sebastian Usher, told us more about the planned legislation. It's still got a way to go, but it essentially is now in the form that it's likely to finally be passed. When it was mooted several months ago in response to these mass protests, which were a major challenge to the Iranian authorities, they finally faded after about five or six months. But the defiance continues amongst Iranian women very, very strongly. So there have been lots of efforts to reinforce the hijab, to make it really mandatory, and the scene is very symbolic of what the Iranian Islamic Republic represent. They see it as more than just the hijab and vice versa. Originally, it was actually possibly softening the law and bringing it down to a misdemeanor rather than a criminal offense. But the latest information that I've been seeing about actually seems to be raising it again and making the possibility of fines which will really be punitive and the possibility of longer prison sentences. That's all a little bit unclear still. Although it was published in some form, what form it's actually in at the moment is not clear. And the fact that it's now going behind closed doors will obviously make that more opaque. But testing the waters of the Iranian authorities really, these extra enforcements that are being carried out vary from city to city. So in the more fundamentalist cities, you will see the morality police out on the streets. In Tehran, you won't see it to that extent. So they're seeing what kind of public pushback there is. And I think this is to avoid the possibility of that pushback building and building. That's what they are trying to avoid, I think, by doing this behind closed doors. On Middle East, analyst Sebastian Asher. It has been described as the deadliest day in Egypt's living memory. On August the 14th, 2013, hundreds of people were killed on the streets of Cairo when security forces brutally dispersed a sit-in of thousands of protesters opposed to the military takeover. BBC Arabic, Sally Nabil in Cairo, spoke to some of those who were there. This day, 10 years ago, Cairo turned into a war zone. The sound of gunfire, police sirens and people screaming. When the Islamist president, Mohamed Morsi, was deposed by the army, his supporters gathered in the square of Rab al-Adawiyyah and camped there for weeks. Then the security forces moved in to disperse them. In a matter of hours, hundreds of protesters were killed. The square was in flames. Life in Egypt has changed for good since this day. Politics has come under the full control of the military-backed president, Abdel Fattah Sisi. There are also many Egyptians who say they have paid a very heavy price for the bloodshed this country witnessed back in 2013. Ten years on, there are wounds that are still open

and people who find it really difficult to get over their traumas.
Amr was only 20 years when he took part in the sit-in.
He says he never thought their gathering would be crushed so brutally.
His face is covered in grief as he recalls that day.
Dead bodies were everywhere.
We couldn't save one another.
A lot of kids lost their lives
and bulldozers were crushing people to death.
I saw snipers shooting a queue of people
who were raising their hands in surrender and leaving the sit-in.
Humanity was killed in Egypt on that day.
After spending five years in prison, Amr moved to the UK.
He was among many protesters and members of the Muslim Brotherhood
who either ended up behind bars or in exile.
Muhammad Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood,
was the first civilian to be elected president
after the overthrow of long-time dictator,
Hosni Mubarak, in the Arab Spring.
Morsi was removed from power after only one year in office.
The authorities said his supporters occupying the square
had an arsenal of weapons, something the Muslim Brotherhood deny.
Although most of the victims were protesters,
a few security personnel also lost their lives.
Wafe tries to find solace in spending time with her grandchildren.
Her son Mustafa, a junior police officer, was fatally shot
two days after the clashes in the square as violence gripped Cairo.
For three years, he was in a coma with Wafe by his side.
His medical condition was by far the worst among all police officers.
Bereaved mothers came to visit me in the hospital
and told me we are in a better position than you.
At least the fate of our sons has been decided.
They called him the living martyr.
This dark chapter of Egypt's history is not over yet.
Nowadays, Cairo is apparently calm, but a lot of anger and pain
is brewing just beneath the surface.
No member of the security services was ever held accountable for the bloodshed
and divisions among Egyptians still run deep.
Salina Bale reporting from Cairo.
Still to come on the Global News Podcast.
We have seven of his trumpets.
The one on display was actually given to him by King George V in England 1934.
A new exhibition dedicated to the jazz legend Louis Armstrong.
The U.S.-based Miss Universe Organization, which hosts beauty pageants around the world,
has cut ties with Miss Universe Indonesia after several contestants filed a complaint

accusing the local organizers of sexual assault.

An investigation is underway.

Olivia Oteba has been following the story.

Six Miss Universe Indonesia candidates have filed a police report accusing pageant organizers of sexual abuse.

It details an occasion two days before this year's final in August, where a body check was carried out to look for scars and cellulite.

It was allegedly during this exam where contestants were asked to strip off their clothes and photos were taken of them topless.

During a press conference this week, one of the complainants detailed how she feels violated after the incident and is struggling with sleep.

A lawyer representing the contestants said that while body checks were carried out in a closed room, there were men present and the door wasn't fully closed which prohibited maximum privacy.

So the parent company is Miss Universe Organization

and they have cut ties with the Indonesian franchise in its owner Poppy Capella, saying it doesn't live up to the brand standards and ethics.

In return, Poppy has said she had no involvement in the examination whatsoever and doesn't condone violence or sexual harassment.

Similarly, Miss Universe Indonesia says it takes allegations of sexual misconduct very seriously and it is carrying out an investigation alongside police in Jakarta.

And what does this mean for the pageants going forward?

While Miss Universe might not be as popular as it once was in the West, make no mistake, it still has an enormous fan base in Southeast Asia.

Winners often go on to becoming celebrities and social media influencers, perhaps even more so than in the UK and US.

So this pageant really has the potential to change people's lives.

In fact, its owner is a transgender billionaire from Thailand and Jack Raduta tip.

She is the first female owner and has taken huge strides in overhauling the brand, including allowing married women, transgender women and single mothers to compete.

The relationship isn't completely severed though, as the Indonesian 2023 title holder will still be allowed to compete in the global Miss Universe pageant in November.

Olivia Otaiba

Only last week, an Nigerian-led delegation from the West African regional bloc Ekoas was refused entry to Niger by the coup leaders there.

But now a group of Muslim clerics from Nigeria who've met the junta in Niger this weekend say they are ready to talk.

So could this be the big breakthrough everyone has been hoping for?

Here's our Africa regional editor, Richard Hamilton.

Ostensibly, this visit and promises by the military junta of being open to dialogue seem positive. After all, it's rare that outsiders managed to speak to them.

Last Tuesday, the coup leaders denied access to another international delegation, saying their safety could not be guaranteed.

But in reality, this latest move may just be gamesmanship by the junta, so that if it comes to war, they can portray themselves as the victims.

We still don't know what form military intervention might take, but it may be on a smaller scale than initially thought.

Niger's ambassador to the US, Kiari Liman Tingiri, was asked what the international community should do next.

I want them to support all the initiatives taken by our regional body, Ekoas.

Propaganda is the military intervention.

Plan by Ekoas is against Niger.

That's not true.

The intervention is almost a police operation.

To free the president, kept hostage.

To free our legitimate institution, kept hostage.

That's what it is about.

The Muslim clerics were received in Niame on Saturday.

The junta told them it wanted unjust, inhumane, and unacceptable sanctions to be lifted.

In return, the clerics stressed that Nigeria, Ekoas's largest and most powerful nation, had no animosity against the people of Niger, and did not want to fight them.

That, they said, would be like fighting their own kin.

Nor the Nigeria and Niger are both dominated by the same Hausa ethnic group, and there's growing unease there about the consequences of a conflict.

Richard Hamilton, our Africa regional editor.

A school in Cambodia has been temporarily closed after explosives, including more than a thousand grenades, were found in its grounds.

They were unearthed when the school cleared land to expand a garden.

The details from Elektra Naismith.

Video of the site in Kratie province shows tons of rusted explosives stacked up in rows.

Grenade, rockets and anti-tank launches complete with missiles and warheads.

The school was apparently the site of a military station during Cambodia's civil war, which ended in the mid-1970s.

Decades later, the country remains one of the most bombed and mined in the world.

An estimated 20,000 people have been killed stepping on unexploded ordnance.

Clearance work continues to this day.

Weapons experts say the discovery of the explosives is a huge stroke of luck for the students, who could easily have been blown up if someone had dug into them.

Lucky for the students too, then they now get an unexpected holiday.

Elektra Naismith.

English literature students are normally used to studying the works of William Shakespeare, V.S. Nipole, Toni Morrison and the like, but a professor at the University of Ghent in Belgium has other plans for her master's students.

Well, that is the singer Taylor Swift, who is currently performing to packed out audiences on her Eras tour.

Dr. Ellie McCausland has devised a new module all about her writings.

I asked Dr. McCausland, why Taylor Swift?

Firstly, she's very popular at the moment.

Her Eras tour keeps making international news for various reasons.

Secondly, there's a personal reason I've been a long-term fan of Taylor Swift.

I have a very personal relationship with her music.

And then the third reason is that I think there is a series of connections between Swift's work and English literature,

which I just increasingly found impossible to ignore.

Yeah, I mean, give us some examples of that.

One of the things we're going to be looking at in my Taylor Swift course is the idea of narrative from different perspectives.

So this is something that has been a sort of trope in literature for a long time.

In Swift's album Folklore from 2020, she has these three songs called August, Betty and Cardigan, which are essentially the same love story told from three different perspectives.

It's a kind of love triangle.

And that got me thinking about the ways in which this has been done in literature.

So you've got the novel Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte.

And then you've got Jean Reese's novel from the 60s, Widesaw Gasso C, which is essentially Jane Eyre, but from the perspective of Bertha Mason.

That is the mad woman in the attic, as she's often known.

And would you have to be a Taylor Swift fan to get on with this course?

No, absolutely not.

I mean, I've made a big point of saying this.

It's open to everyone.

I would strongly encourage people who've maybe never heard of Taylor Swift or who don't like her music to join in, because A, the focus of the course is still English literature.

And B, I'm really interested in inspiring debates.

I really, I find it very exciting when students are enthusiastic and passionate, and that can often be passionate about something they dislike.

And I would encourage that kind of passion.

So it's absolutely not just for fans.

It's open to everyone.

And the more diverse an audience we have in the course, the better, I think.

And could this kind of course be applied to other musical artists?

Or is there something unique about Taylor Swift?

Well, I want to say yes, it could be.

I mean, I think there's no limit.

It's certainly not confined to Taylor Swift.

I think there's something about her music that is particularly literary quality.

But of course, you know, Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize for literature.

So she's not the first artist that one can make these connections with.

But what I will say, she has a very large corpus of music to choose from.

And she's very good at writing quite kind of generically diverse music.

She really dives into different genres, different sort of themes, different aesthetics in her work.

And that makes it particularly exciting from a literary point of view.

Dr. Ellie McCausland.

Now, if you're a fan of Louis or, as he preferred to be known, Louis Armstrong, you'll be delighted to hear that a brand new exhibition of the Jazz Legends Possessions has opened in New York.

Wendy Urquhart has the details.

He was one of the most influential jazz musicians ever.

And his rich, gravelly voice is unmistakable.

Louis Daniel Armstrong or Satchmo, as he became known, grew up dirt poor in a rough area of New Orleans.

He made a name for himself as a cornet player on the Mississippi River steamboats and toured non-stop well into old age.

In the early years, he spent a lot of time in Chicago

and switched to the trumpet when he played

with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra in New York.

In 1925, he formed Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five in Chicago,

but had to flee to Europe in the 1930s after a run-in with a mafia.

His return to America was well timed,

because jazz from the 1920s was back in fashion.

Before long, he was an international star with a huge fan base,

but the best was yet to come.

Hello Dolly was released in 1964.

It went to number one in the charts,

dislodging the Beatles from the top spot and won him a Grammy.

He eventually settled in Queens, New York,

and although he died in 1971,

Ricky Ricardi, who's director of research collections

for the Louis Armstrong House Museum,

says interest in the jazz musician never wanes.

The Louis Armstrong House Museum is Armstrong's house.

It's where he lived with his wife, Lucille, for the last 28 years.

We get school groups every day.

We get international visitors.

They want to see the Armstrong House.

They want to see how he lived.

And we also have this incredible exhibit area,

which has kind of the best of the archives.

There's nothing quite as spine-tingling as the trumpet

at the beginning of summertime.

And Ricky Ricardi says there's a few trumpets in the collection too.

We have seven of his trumpets.

The one on display was actually given to him by King George V in England, 1934.

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The man who is widely considered to be the founding father of jazz will be remembered for his unmistakable voice, his onstage charisma, and his incredible talent.

That report by Wendy Urquhart.

And that is all from us for now,

but the Global News Podcast will be back very soon.

This edition was mixed by Caroline Driscoll and produced by Emma Joseph, our editors Karen Martin.

I'm Oliver Conway.

Until next time, goodbye.