

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Humanitarian aid to enter Gaza

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I'm Valerie Sanderson and in the early hours of Thursday the 19th of October these are our main stories. Both Israel and Egypt have agreed that limited aid of food, water and medicine can enter Gaza after this request from President Biden on his whirlwind trip to Tel Aviv. Today I asked the Israeli cabinet to agree to the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza. There will be inspections that the aid should go to civilians not to amass. Mr Biden also said he's seen information indicating the explosion at a hospital in Gaza had been caused by an Islamist terror group. We examine what we know about the blast that's killed hundreds of people. Also in this podcast Republican Congressman Jim Jordan has failed again to gather enough support to become Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. This candidate does not and will not be able to get the Republican votes to become Speaker so then now I think all of us have to get together and figure out what's the next step. And Japan's government unveils measures to counter over tourism at famous sites including Mount Fuji.

President Biden says the United States will stand beside Israel through the dark days but is also warned that it must make an honest assessment about the path it's on and whether it will achieve its aims. Mr Biden was speaking during a brief visit to Tel Aviv which has been overshadowed by the death of hundreds of people in an explosion at a hospital in Gaza. The president

also called for humanitarian aid to be allowed into Gaza on the condition it doesn't end up in the wrong hands. If a mosque diverts or steals the assistance they will have demonstrated once again that they have no concern for the welfare of the Palestinian people. We're working in close cooperation with the government of Egypt the United Nations and its agencies like the World Program and other partners in the region to get trucks moving across the border as soon as possible. Separately I ask Israel that the global community demand that the international Red Cross be able to visit hostages. Today I'm also announcing 100 million dollars of new U.S. funding for humanitarian assistance in both Gaza and the West Bank. This money will support more than one million displaced and conflict affected Palestinians including emergency needs in Gaza. Mr Biden has now left the region after Palestinian and Arab leaders cancelled meetings with him following the blast at the hospital in Gaza. President Biden said the U.S. mourned the loss of Palestinian lives but also said the world could not stand by after the attack by Hamas on the 7th of October which killed more than 1,300 Israelis. For decades we've ensured Israel's qualitative military edge and later this week I'm going to ask the United States Congress for unprecedented support package for Israel's defense. We're going to keep Iron Dome fully supplied so it can continue standing sentinel over Israeli skies saving Israeli lives. We've moved U.S. military assets to the region including positioning the USS Ford

carrier strike group in the Eastern Mediterranean with the USS Eisenhower on the way to defer further aggression against Israel and to prevent this conflict from spreading. And my message to any state or any other hostile actor thinking about attacking Israel remains the same as it was a week ago. Don't, don't, don't. Both Egypt and Israel have agreed to food, water and medicine going into Gaza. A correspondent where a Davis in Jerusalem told me about the significance of getting Egypt's border crossing open for humanitarian purposes. This is a big breakthrough for those the United Nations like aid agencies who've been increasingly concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Thus far Israel's policy had been that no aid at all would get into Gaza either through the Israeli borders or via the southern border with Egypt at Rafa until those 199 hostages being detained by Hamas were released. But the president he almost demanded this of Israel that it had to open and allow some sort of aid through because for Israel on one hand to demand that over a million Palestinians leave their homes in northern Gaza from those areas where the Israeli Air Force was targeting but to have nothing to go to in the south of Gaza and to be involved in that dire humanitarian situation that is clearly unacceptable to the international community. And President Biden made it clear to the Israelis today not only did he meet Benjamin Netanyahu but he met the Israeli war cabinet and he made that demand to the Israeli war cabinet and Israel conceded that it now would allow limited humanitarian aid through the Rafa crossing with the agreement of Egypt on account that none of it makes its way to the Hamas militant group. Well you mentioned the Israeli hostages and of course more than 30 of them are American or at least hold American passport. Yeah this is a massive concern for Israelis as well. Other internationals are on that list of 199 people thought to have been abducted by Hamas and held hostage inside the Gaza Strip. Very little news has come out about their condition and there are protests daily in Israel. People concern that Israel's stated intention of going into Gaza to defeat and destroy Hamas may of course have consequences for the hostages and Joe Biden made it clear today he said without going into specifics because it was a delicate matter that he had brought that issue up and getting the hostages release was a prime concern to him. This is the first time a US president has visited the country during a war. Did he achieve his aim do you think during this visit? I think so and this is mindful of the fact of course the events in that hospital in Gaza city which was hit in an attack in which hundreds of people have thought to have been killed that was threatening to overshadow the visit that had a knock-on effect in that the Arab leaders who Joe Biden was meant to meet on the second leg of this trip pulled out of that meeting so the expectations were quite low when Joe Biden arrived in Israel. It was a very short visit less than half a day long but I think with those concessions with those points he made in his speech he did make some ground. We're at Davis in Jerusalem. Well as we reported earlier President Biden also said that based on the information he'd seen Tuesday's explosion at the Ali Hospital in Gaza had been caused by an errant rocket fired by a terrorist group in Gaza. Israel says the device had been fired by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group. Hamas then blamed an Israeli airstrike. Rear Admiral Daniel Higari who's a spokesman for the Israeli Defense Forces set out what they believe had happened. It was at the time that 6 59 p.m. when there were reports of an explosion at the Ali al-Mahdani Hospital in Gaza City. According to our intelligence Hamas checked the reports understood it was an Islamic Jihad rocket that had misfired and decided to launch a global media campaign to hide what really happened. Palestinian Islamic Jihad says the accusations are false and baseless adding it doesn't use hospitals for its forces. Dr. Basim Naeem who's a spokesman for Hamas told the BBC that the group could not

have been behind the explosion. We don't have the facility or the capability for such as a huge and aggressive attack. We are ready to invite an international investigation committee to investigate the situation on the ground but with one guarantee that if any side is responsible he should also be brought to accountability. With access to the site of the explosion that the hospital in Gaza limited BBC Verify has been studying footage of the moments just before the blast. Kailine Hawley has been investigating what we know so far.

Video footage records chaos at Al-Ahli hospital after the explosion at a huge fireball.

With the Gaza Strip cut off from the world experts including BBC verification teams have been pouring over all the images that have emerged from the scene to try to establish the cause of the explosion that's claimed so many lives. Israeli army released what it said was an intercepted conversation between two Hamas operatives discussing the strike and saying it appeared to be a missile misfired by Islamic jihad. It's not possible to independently verify the recording but the BBC has verified images from the scene this morning that appear to show a relatively small crater inside the hospital courtyard. You can see abandoned clothes and mattresses on a patch of grass where many garrsons seem to have been sleeping as they sheltered from

the Israeli bombardment of the past few days. There's limited structural damage to hospital buildings and some weapons experts consulted by the BBC say that a typical Israeli airstrike would cause a larger crater and greater damage and suggest that the fire could have been started by rocket fuel but Kim Hughes a former bomb disposal officer who served in Afghanistan in Iraq says that to really know what happened it's critical to get to the site itself. There is evidence of a high explosive event so something has occurred there what that may be we don't know whether it was a projectile a free-flight rocket guided system an explosive device in a car until you get on the ground and do a post blast analysis you're not going to know essentially what has occurred. Amnesty International says the international criminal court need to be allowed access to conduct an urgent and independent investigation of what it called a terrible crime. Caroline Hawley the hospital explosion has sparked widespread regional outrage there were sporadic

clashes between protesters and security forces in the occupied west bank in Lebanon tear gas was deployed to break up demonstrators near the US embassy there have been similar scenes in Tunisia and Turkey with many condemning western countries for their support of Israel a correspondent

and Harding went to a pro-palestinian rally outside the Israeli embassy in the Jordanian capital Amman. The big crowd several thousand strong has gathered here outside the Israeli embassy they're

waving Palestinian flags they bombed the hospital do you can you imagine that they're saying they didn't bomb at all that it was actually a Palestinian rocket it is a lie so you could not trust anything the Israelis said now no no we saw something and they say that otherwise so they are liars if I lie to you will you trust me again and what do you think of the way the west is reacting to the outrages committees in Israel and then the subsequent attacks by Israel in Gaza Palestinians and Gazans are the victim the Israeli are the attackers you can't blame someone who's present in Gaza for years for trying to take their country back my name is Bilal how old are you yes 24 why are you here today support Palestine my original country so you like many people here

like more than two million people are originally Palestinians refugees yes we are one people did you hope that if President Biden had come here for a summit that that might have changed things no not really he announced his support to Israel I don't care about him if he come here or not what do you think happens next here and in Gaza where is this going they bombed a hospital well you know that's disputed we've heard different accounts about that there's some evidence that suggests it could have been a rocket fired from within Gaza that's not true it seems to me there is no way that people here would be prepared to believe anything that Israel said about that yes of course there's no trust not just here in every Arab country 22 country we all don't believe anything Israel there's a 16 year old girl here doesn't want to give her name or surname but is willing to talk were you hoping that president Biden might come here and that he might have some

ability to change the situation in Gaza we've all been hoping that we can change the situation whether it's president Biden or any other person we've been hoping that they can get the humanitarian

help they need what about outside Gaza here in Jordan in Lebanon and elsewhere do you think that this is a moment of greater risk for the region yeah of course I mean our schools have been stopped today people are not going to work they're not going to get their living so obviously it's going to start another conflict in the region whether it's here in Jordan or in other Middle East countries so that gives you a sense of the mood here in Amman a country with a huge number of Palestinian refugees and where there is it seems very little appetite to believe a word that Israel is saying about what's been happening in Gaza Andrew Harding in Jordan let's get a bit more now on the prospect

of the border with Egypt opening after president sisi said he will allow about 20 aid trucks to cross into Gaza president Biden said the trucks will be allowed to enter even if an Israeli offensive is ongoing his only precondition is that it should not be diverted to Hamas I spoke to our Middle East editor Sebastian Usher just before president sisi's announcement what Egypt has been saying over the past few days as hundreds of lorries with supplies urgently needed in Gaza have been piling up on the Egyptian border waiting to go through they're saying that it's inoperable because of airstrikes by Israel and they even accused Israel of placing concrete blocks there so it Egypt essentially took the position of we want this humanitarian to go in we want there to be a safe haven inside Gaza where people will have the food they'll have the fuel they'll have the water and most importantly it's almost about have the shelter with tents that will go in that's what the foreign minister has been saying and essentially the idea that there'll be a huge exodus of Palestinians

coming out Egypt is completely against that for a number of reasons so what president Biden succeeded

in doing and I think to be honest I mean yes this was a positive step but I think it's the very least that he could have achieved during this trip he had to have something to show beyond the solidarity that he showed very movingly with the Israeli people and he did do it very well but he had to have something positive so he pulled this out of the bag the Israelis essentially have accepted it but we don't know when the trucks are going to start in every single day matters every single hour matters for the Palestinians do you think president Biden will have changed minds in the Arab world about what happened at that hospital no is a simple answer absolutely not I mean essentially the minds are already made up because of what they see as the

history of the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel they see Israel always as the aggressors even when Israel essentially presents itself and sees itself and is seen by much of a world as striking back after being hit this inflamed the protests that already there far further and this is not just a threat to the way the US wants to ease tensions it's a threat to Arab states that have been moving closer and closer to Israel the ones who signed the Abraham Accords the two countries

Egypt and Jordan which have historic peace deals in Saudi Arabia which are moving towards that as well they now have to reckon once again with the voices on the street and they want to control that because what they don't want to have happen is protests that go beyond their control and might turn as we've seen in the occupied west bank against them as well as against Israel so what are the dangers of escalation now do you think I mean do we know if a ground offensive by the Israelis is actually now going to take place we don't know because the Israelis haven't haven't told us but all the preparation is there and what might have changed that from the Israeli perspective was if this had been a slam dunk and proof that Israel had done it that might have begun to seep away some of the support of the international community the west that it's received which might

then make it think twice about going in on the full ground offensive so that hasn't really happened President Biden as we saw backed the Israeli version of events so I don't think those dimensions have changed that much but we're going to see more and more pressure from Arab states as their people speak to try and get the international community to act and to prevent what they see as potential carnage in Gaza. Sebastian Usher here's Jackie with some news about another special edition of the global news podcast. You might have heard the special edition we recorded answering listeners questions on events in Israel and Gaza and international reaction to them. A lot of you have since been in touch to ask us to do it again so we will. Send us your questions anything you want explained and our correspondents will endeavour to provide context and clarity. Please record us a voice message or simply write your question and email it to global podcast at bbc.co.uk. Thank you.

In Washington the hardline Republican congressman Jim Jordan has again failed to win enough support

from his own party to be elected as the new Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Mario Diaz-Ballat is one of the Republicans who refused to vote for him.

This candidate does not and will not be able to get the Republican votes to become Speaker so then now I think all of us have to get together and figure out what's the next step.

Another vote won't take place before Thursday and North America correspondent Noma Iqbal told us more.

Well to put it quite bluntly Republicans House Republicans are in chaos so Jim Jordan he did a lot of heavy lobbying yesterday and actually he got more Republicans turning against him than four so yesterday he got 20 Republicans voted against him and today the numbers increased to 22 so that means he's not met that threshold to carry a majority and he earlier was saying he wasn't sure whether he'd proceed to a third round of voting but he has now said that he will and so Congress is in recess at the moment so they can theoretically keep going at this for some time but it does obviously affect hugely what's happening because because Congress is in disarray it means lots of crucial issues can't be voted on. He's bombastic he's confrontational like the man who has endorsed him Donald Trump the lots of Republicans are really angry about the way things are

going

so there are some more centrist Republicans who will never vote for him because they don't think that someone as conservative as him should be the face of the House Republicans. You've got those that are furious Kevin McCarthy was forced out two weeks ago you've got those who are angry Steve Scalise's bid for the gavel went nowhere and then you have some who are accusing Jim Jordan's supporters

of aggressive tactics they say they have been intimidated or threatened because they refuse to vote for him. Interestingly I'm now hearing and lots of reports are being heard that all roads point to the interim speaker at the moment Patrick McHenry he is just standing in for the moment but

there could be moves to elevate him there are suggestions that he could become House Speaker for a bit longer and Democrats might even vote for him. For Democrats I think it's a good move it makes them look like they are saving the day but also it means they can extract some concessions if they do indeed say they'll vote for him. Nomiya Iqbal a Canadian woman has spoken for the first time about her marriage to one of the Islamic State militants known as the Beatles a murderous ISL and her time living with him in Syria. Duramed claims she was oblivious to what was going on when it came to the atrocities being committed by her then-husband El Shafi El Sheikh. Poonam Taneja interviewed Duramed as part of the podcast series Bloodlines which is produced jointly by the BBC and the Canadian broadcaster CBC in Canada. James Copnell asked Poonam how the interview came

about. So I first came across Duramed last November she and her sons were living in a squalid desert camp with the otherwise in children of suspected IS militants in North East Syria and she had offered to speak to us about a missing British child I was searching for and this is part of the Bloodlines podcast series and at first I had absolutely no idea about her husband's identity but after investigating further I learned about the connection. I discovered that she'd met El Sheikh when he was visiting relatives in Canada back in 2007. She was 17 he was 19 they married in 2010 and he traveled to Syria in 2012. She then joined him two years later after the murders carried out by El Sheikh's ISL had caused outrage across the world and I asked for that about El Sheikh's crime. Tiawaz how do you feel about it? I mean he was married to someone

who quite- I didn't know. You didn't know? No. Yeah yeah well he's been convicted if I didn't know. I didn't understand it at that time I'd understand why I can't just go you know to a friend's house for a little bit I didn't understand why he always had to know who it was why we couldn't go out so much this is why he was so paranoid like who comes to the house there was like hearings of drones or

why we had to rush home or all this paranoia. Given El Shafi's role did you not know at all that this is what he was doing? No God no no. He didn't share anything like that with you? No he wouldn't he wouldn't share anything anything I can't even ask him where you're going you know what I

mean it's he was very tight-lipped about everything don't ask where I am don't ask where I'm going don't ask where I went don't ask who is that don't ask who's you know who's coming who's don't ask who's in the other room don't ask where is Durey Ahmed now? Well Durey Ahmed is now in Toronto in Canada she and her sons were among a group of Canadian women and children repatriated

to Canada and from Syria back in April now the 33 year old was arrested upon arrival and she was then granted bail she's been ordered to live under specific restrictions according to a terrorism peace fund on Monday that bond was reviewed in a court in Brampton in Ontario and the crown lawyer has argued that Arnold had been steeped in IF ideology and it would have been likely that she knew of her husband's role with the group before leaving for Canada. Put down Dineja and you can get that new podcast series Bloodlines wherever you get your podcast from. It's a scandal that has overshadowed football in Spain the president of one of the country's biggest and most prestigious clubs Barcelona is now under formal investigation in connection with an alleged bribery scheme during its golden years of domestic and European glory. Our European editor Danny Eberhard told me more about the allegations. They linked into a tax investigation into a company that was run by the number two of Spanish refereeing a man called Jose Maria Enrique de Negrera and his son and the tax investigation showed that large payments were coming from Barcelona over a period from 2001 to 2018 these totaled some 7.7 million dollars. The wider investigation came from there. Barcelona says that these payments were made for videos compiled about referees to be used in coaching for example to help players know the sort of referees that might give you a yellow card for a certain offense or something like that but obviously there's a suspicion that actually this was about bribery. A judge has been examining this and he suspects that Barcelona may have got an advantage over these years through some sort of corrupt scheme. And you've named a couple of people who is said to be involved in this. On the Barcelona side the club itself is under suspicion and then three presidents this decision now concerns the current president a man called Joan Laporta. He was previously president once before and this is about his first term as president but it's also about two presidents subsequent to him and also the Barcelona board itself so lots of people being caught up in this. And what is Barcelona saying? Barcelona and all the other people so the presidents and the referee and their son all deny wrongdoing so at this stage no one has been charged either so we await to see what happens when the investigation continues to see whether the judge believes there's enough evidence to actually bring charges on bribery and corruption in sport. Danny Eberhardt. Japan's government has unveiled measures to counter over-tourism at famous sites including Mount Fuji which are struggling with the post-pandemic surge of foreign visitors. Will Leonardo report? Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said local communities were being impacted by a huge surge in visitor numbers including by particularly Japanese concern their bad manners. The new measures mean rail operators will be allowed to hike fees during busy periods and tourists encouraged towards less traveled spots. Japan has seen foreign tourism return to near record levels helped by Beijing's lifting of restrictions on outbound tour groups from China. While the economy has benefited famous spots are being blighted by crowds not least Japan's sacred highest peak Mount Fuji. Their officials have complained about bus loads of unprepared climbers leaving huge piles of rubbish and even sleeping in toilets to escape the cold. Will Leonardo. Let's return to our top story. Unra is the UN agency that provides all sorts of support to Palestinians in Gaza. It's schools and other compounds and are being used as shelters for thousands of people. So have they been told when the border crossing between Egypt and Gaza will open? Here's Juliet Turner Unra's communications director who's based in Amman in Jordan. No but we do hope that it happens as soon as possible. We are pre-positioning supplies and we

are ready to go and then we need also other type of assistance like for example food because 1.2 million people rely on food assistance in the Gaza Strip. Do you ever have any problem with groups requisitioning your supplies of things like fuel and water? So under I can confirm that there has not been any looting of our assistance across the Gaza Strip. Unra is what we call a direct implementer which means that we are a UN agency that is highly operational in the Gaza Strip. We are the largest with 13,000 staff who provide the assistance themselves to the population in need and we've been doing it for more than seven decades now. Indeed and are you able to give the various parties the assurances that it won't fall into the wrong hands as it were?

Well we are a neutral and impartial UN agency and we make sure to have systems in place for scrutiny and monitoring and evaluation for where our assistance goes. Our assistance has been going

to the hands of Palestine refugees in need for more than 70 years now, 70 years. How urgent is it that that border crossing opens? Are we talking hours or days? Super urgent. We're already very, very late. Before the war we used to bring in supplies all the time into the Gaza Strip and now with 10 days of this very tight siege with no assistance coming in as disastrous.

There have been some talk of creating safe zones in southern Gaza where it'd be easier to supply people with the aid that they need. Have you heard anything more about that? What we do know, James, is that no place is safe in Gaza. I mean just yesterday there was a hospital that has come under attack. We had an unrest school that has come under attack. We keep losing staff members. The border crossing may open. The trucks may start to drive across but it's not going to be easy getting the supplies to the people who need it given the ongoing conflict.

Well, there needs to be a ceasefire as soon as possible because otherwise people will continue to be killed totally unnecessarily. Civilians will continue to be killed totally unnecessarily.

And yes, it will complicate this massive humanitarian operation that we've been running in the Gaza Strip. It will complicate it massively. That was Anra's Juliet Turner speaking there to James Menendez. Our international editor Jeremy Bowen is in the other Palestinian territory, the West Bank, and he's been looking at what President Biden achieved on his visit to Israel given the setback of not meeting Arab leaders. President Biden came here to support Israel's war effort while finding a way to ease the humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip.

Alakali Hospital was hit before he'd even boarded Air Force One to fly to Tel Aviv.

That made it much harder, even impossible to square a very difficult circle. The deal Joe Biden announced to open Gaza's border to humanitarian traffic from Egypt will allow him to say the trip was worth it. For Palestinians, the relief will be real but limited. Israel says fuel will not be allowed in, which is needed for generators to keep hospitals going. Joe Biden can also say he's delivered a message to Israel's enemies in Iran and Lebanon. His presence, plus the two aircraft carrier battle groups he's sent to the Eastern Mediterranean, has underlined America's determination to deter a wider war. The President's summit with Arab leaders in Jordan was cancelled

after the attack on Alakali Hospital. Arab kings, princes, and presidents know their populations have made up their minds about America's complicity in Israel's killing of civilians. Whatever evidence to the contrary the Israeli army provides, Arab leaders need to identify with popular anger in their own countries and they must fear that if they don't there could be a revival of the uprisings that swept the Arab world in 2011. Jeremy Bowen

And that's it from us for now, but there'll be a new edition of the Global News Podcast later.

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If you want to comment on this podcast or the topics covered in it, send us an email.

The address is GlobalPodcast at bbc.co.uk and you can also find us on X, formerly known as Twitter, at Global NewsPod. This edition was mixed by Nick Randall, the producer was Emma Joseph. The editor as ever is Karen Martin. I'm Valerie Sanderson, until next time, bye-bye.

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