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

I'm Alex Ridsson and in the early hours of Monday, the 9th of October, these are our main stories. More than 700 Israeli citizens are reported killed since the Hamas militant group launched a huge offensive from Gaza on Saturday.

My country has suffered hundreds of fatalities. This is Israel's 9-11. We will not let the world forget the atrocities our country suffered.

Israel's military responds by pummeling the Gaza Strip. Palestinians say more than 400 people have died. Everywhere you go in Gaza, you see funeral, you see death, you see building collapsing. So you feel that you could be next. This bomb could be on top of your home, top of your apartment.

The U.S. is sending support to Israel, including its most advanced aircraft carrier group.

So in this podcast, the number of confirmed victims of Afghanistan's latest earthquake passes a thousand, and the Welsh Museum that's missing almost 2,000 items.

In the past few hours, we've been getting more details about the people killed in southern Israel on Saturday by gunmen belonging to the Palestinian militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Israeli media say that around 700 people died in the unprecedented assault after the militants broke through the barrier surrounding the Gaza Strip. We now know that more than 250 of those killed were at a music festival. The BBC's Joe Floto is in Jerusalem.

The ZAKA organization, which the group of volunteers, they've recovered more than 250 bodies from the site of that music festival, and bodies still remain there. So that is a huge total of people who have been killed, but it won't come as a shock because we know just how bad that attack was, and we've been hearing testimony from people who survived that attack that said the shooting carried on for hours, that there were gunmen approaching the revelers, the festival goers, on both sides, and they chased them through the countryside and into the forests and back to their cars and established roadblocks. And we've seen pictures today of the remains of those cars burnt out, shot up, and there were bodies lying in the streets in the surrounding areas. Joe Floto in Jerusalem. The Israeli government says at least 100 people have been taken hostage. The army is still battling to regain control of some areas. In Gaza, Israel's military response has intensified. Palestinian health officials say there have been more than 400 deaths so far and more than 2,000 injuries.

Our correspondent Yolande Nell is in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon. You may find parts of her report upsetting.

Through the day, southern Israel has seen more gunfights as security forces have tried to track down Palestinian militants still at large and free hostages. Close to Ashkelon, there were dramatic scenes as Israeli soldiers pursued gunmen from Gaza driving a stolen

car and killed them on the roadside. But many are still missing their fates unknown. There's now huge concern for the dozens of Israelis, including women and children, believed to have been taken back to Gaza as hostages by Palestinian militant groups. Reina Nahr lives in a Kibbutz, a small community near Gaza. She said her sons were taken from their beds.

I was on the phone with my youngest. I wasn't home at the time. And all I could hear is him begging for not to take him because he's too young. I'm begging you, our mothers, of all places in the world, help me find my sons and return them home. They are just kids. Israel's military has hit the Gaza Strip hard, striking more than 450 targets, which it said were mostly associated with Hamas. Its chief spokesman, Rear Admiral Daniel Higari, warned it would be a long campaign.

The days ahead will be long and difficult. We have paid a heavy price, but we will restore security to the people of Israel. Let me repeat, we will store security to the people of Israel. Israeli Rear Admiral Daniel Higari ending that report by Yolande Nell. Earlier, I got an update on developments on the ground from our correspondent John Donison in Jerusalem.

We've got reservists being called up in the tens of thousands, and there is a huge movement of force towards the Gaza border. Now, given the surprised nature of this assault by Hamas, I do think it could be several days before we see the full weight of Israel's response.

Drawing up plans, but I think it is almost inevitable that there is going to be some sort of ground operation, and it's for that reason that so many troops are being pulled in from all across the country. Although we did actually meet a mother of a soldier just when I was at the airport

coming into Israel today, and she said her son had been diverted to go down to the Gaza border. Gaza, he's in the military, but he'd then been told to go back to where he'd been stationed in the north because of fears that tensions are rising up there on the border with Lebanon too. Is that description of the past 48 hours being among the darkest in Israel's history fair?

It absolutely is. I mean, this is a traumatic moment for Israel. There's just been nothing like it. When you look at that figure, which is now being estimated at 700 Israelis killed in some Israeli media outlets, I was just looking back at some of the previous conflicts between Hamas in Gaza and Israel. The 2008-2009 conflict, 13 Israelis killed, 2012-6 Israelis killed, 2014-73 Israelis killed. We're looking at 700 here, and 100 hostages taken too.

John Donelson in Jerusalem. Israeli warplanes continued to bombard Gaza in retaliation for Saturday's attack. Video images show many buildings being blown up and large-scale destruction. Shops are closed. The streets are empty. The city is said to be like a ghost town. Health officials say more than 400 people have been killed so far, many of them civilians. And Palestinians are now living in fear of their lives. One aid worker likened a major hospital in Gaza City to a slaughterhouse. Dr. Khamis Alessi, who's a consultant, said the situation was unbearable.

You can hear the bombardment and the shilling from every corner. Everywhere you go in Gaza, you see funerals, you see buildings collapsing. It's just like you're watching a movie about the end of life on the earth. I haven't slept for a second, 10 yesterday, because you cannot just close your eyes. The kids are crying, screaming. So you feel that you could be next. I mean, this bomb could be on top of your home, on top of your apartment.

We've got the latest from our reporter in Gaza, Rushdie Abu Alif.

It has been very intense fighting throughout the day. Hundreds of targets were hit by

the Israelis. The IDF said they have targeted 800 Hamas targets. The latest one was about like 100 meters from our office here in downtown. It's called the production bank. It's a bank set up by Hamas. It's a 34-story building completely destroyed, live into the ground, closing the main street of the Omar al-Mukhtar street. This is the main street in downtown Gaza. It's completely blocked by the debris of this building. Here in Gaza, night always carry painful memories for the people when there is escalation with Israel, because usually Israel will escalate the airstrikes in Gaza as they started retaliation for the Hamas massive attack on the border and fired thousands of rockets yesterday. Since last night, Israel have been targeting many installations for Hamas buildings, banks, two or three mosques were destroyed in southern Gaza. Many, many targets for Hamas has been destroyed. When we talk about the second day of this fighting, the image here today is completely different from yesterday. Yesterday, we have seen people in the street celebrating what they said that Hamas was revenging from Israel for the continuous Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. As some of the people told me in the street, today is completely a different image. Today is an image of destruction everywhere. Even downtown Gaza was most of the streets were blocked by buildings knocked down by the Israelis, completely destroyed, live into the ground. Tonight, Israeli drones, Israeli fighters are still flying over Gaza and people are expecting another night of fighting. Rushdie Abu Alouf in Gaza. Israeli commentators are calling the events since Saturday, they're 9-11, they're Pearl Harbor. In other words, a sense of the nation attacked in a way that has left a deep feeling of vulnerability and trauma. What's going to be the government's response to that? Tim Frank spoke to Danny Denon, a member of the Knesset for the governing liquid party. There are still terrorists in our territories. We are fighting and we are clearing the areas in the community in the southern border with Gaza. And at the same time, we are preparing to launch our strike. And it will be a painful one to teach a lesson, the leadership of Hamas, about the barbaric acts the community yesterday. We will use all of our might to restore security and safety to the people of Israel. What do you think security and safety looks like? We have to eliminate Hamas period. It will not be easy, but that is the only solution. We left Gaza 18 years ago. You don't have any Jewish community in Gaza today. You don't have any so-called occupation in Gaza today. And still, we have seen what happened in Gaza. We feel for the people of Gaza. We have nothing against the civilians in Gaza. And we call them today to move, not to stay next to the headquarters of Hamas, who are trying to use them as human shields. We will hand them down. We will find them. And we will hope that it will be short, but we are ready for a long operation. I can understand it's a very simple aspiration to get rid of Hamas. The problem is, you have got a pretty powerful militant organization in the Gaza Strip, which is one of the most densely populated areas on Earth, more than 2 million people in a very small strip of land, saying that you want to eradicate Hamas. I just wonder what the territory of the Gaza Strip is going to look like if you get to the point where you say, right, there are no more people from Hamas inside Gaza. I mean, the place will be reduced to rubble, won't it? That is not our intention. You're right. Gaza will not look the same, but we have no other options. To be blamed is Hamas and not Israel. It was an unprovoked,

brutal attack against our communities. That's why we have to take action. And we will do whatever is necessary. If they're hiding in hospitals, we should go into the hospital. If they're fighting in the tunnels, we should find them and kill them in the tunnels. But you are aware, of course, that, I mean, when you say that you're just hunting Hamas and that you're asking the civilians to move away from Hamas, it is near on impossible for those civilians of Gaza to find safe harbor anywhere. I mean, your intention not to harm civilians and yet your desire to degrade Hamas to the point where it cannot operate. The two cannot sit together, can they? We will not get into the technical aspects, but also in the past, we always did our best to minimize the casualties of the civilians. And those casualties have always in the past been vast. And we will continue to do our best. And I think also in the future, we will send the messages to the people in Gaza, they still can move to different locations, different neighborhoods. They should not be around the Hamas militant. We know exactly where they're hiding. They also know where they're hiding. And I would advise them to use the next few hours to move. I look at the end game. There is no place for a ceasefire with terrorist organization. There is no game for negotiations now. After what happened yesterday, I think today you have a consensus among Israelis that we have no choice. We have to do that now. May I ask what you say to those who say that, although you're talking about consensus, the very reason that Hamas attacked when it did is because they have seen an Israel that has become divided, riven with hate in the words of one Israeli commentator who I was reading today, and therefore weakened because of the government that your Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has led and that you have had people refusing or considering, refusing to serve because they feel such disgust at what this government is doing. And that that is what has undermined Israel's strength. That is ridiculous. First of all, don't look for reasoning when you deal with a terrorist organization in the same way you cannot find reasoning for 9-11 or for ISIS. When you deal with barbaric radical Muslims, don't look for logic. Second, today we are united. You don't have left or right or position or coalition. We are crying. We are in pain, but also we find the strength to fight back. That's exactly what will happen in the next few days. Member of the Israeli Knesset, Danny Danon speaking to the BBC's Tim Franks. Any ground offensive by the army will be made all the more difficult by the Israeli hostages being held in Gaza. I asked our security correspondent Frank Gardner what can be done about them. This isn't easy because ideally, if it was just one or two, probably being held in one location, Israel will plan a special forces raid. They're very good at this. They've got their Sayyarat Metcal, sort of equivalent of Delta Force SAS to go in, masked people, you know, they do this pretty efficiently. But going into Gaza is fraught with difficulties because almost certainly Hamas will have distributed the hostages in several different locations, underground in-sellers with no comms. They'll stay offline and they will be in areas that are heavily populated, so there's no chance of approaching quietly on foot undetected, which leaves negotiations. How long did it take for Israel to get Gilad Shalit back? He was kidnapped in 2006 in a cross-border raid by Hamas. He wasn't released till five years later and it took the release of Israeli-held Palestinian prisoners to secure his release, so it's going to be a really thorny one, that. And longer term, what the Netanyahu government, which is particularly hard line, will want to do is impress upon Hamas that an action such as it is undertaken this weekend comes with such an unbearable cost that they shouldn't do it again. And unfortunately, it's the Palestinian people who are going to pay the bulk of it. I mean, the Israelis already

turned off the electricity, cutting off fuel, but I think the more pragmatic elements of Israeli society will want to see in the long run a continuation of the search for a lasting peace solution, one that actually gives the Palestinians a functioning, contiguous state, not one that is absolutely pockmarked with settlements. The less pragmatic elements, though, of the Netanyahu government might well be urging the Israeli Defence Forces to go all into Gaza. I'm glad you mentioned that because that is not unrelated to the hostage issue. You're absolutely right. And I think there are signs already that Israeli armor is starting to move towards Gaza. This is not a silver bullet to deal with it. It may make hardliners and people like Itamar Ben Gavir, the security minister, maybe it may give them a nice warm fuzzy feeling that they're striking back. It's going to result in horrendous casualties on both sides. You've got 2.3 million Palestinians in that area. Their weapons are not as powerful as the Israeli Defence Forces, but my goodness, this is going to be costly. There's going to be a very high death toll if that happens. One last question, Frank. How did Israel not see this coming? I've been racking my brains on this one and talking to Israelis about it. And I think many Israelis are asking the same questions in quite an angry tone from their own government and military leaders. I think the answer is that there might well have been people pretty low down the pecking order who did see it coming. So I can only imagine that warnings that were given that something is brewing were ignored, further up the chain, that somebody said, ah, there's always trouble from coming from Gaza. We're used to it. We've got this. And of course, don't forget, this took place on one of the holiest days in the Jewish calendar, a day of celebration coming at the end of the Festival of Sukkot, which comes to the end of the kind of Jewish biblical year of reading of the Torah. And Israel's guard was down. If that sounds familiar, it happened 50 years ago at Yom Kippur. The BBC security correspondent, Frank Gardner. Iran has praised Hamas for carrying out the attack on Israel. President Ibrahim Raisi called on other Muslim countries to join the conflict against Israel. The militant group Hezbollah, which is backed by Iran, launched an artillery attack into Israel from Lebanon on Sunday morning. Speaking to supporters in Beirut, a Hezbollah senior official Hashem Safiiddin offered support for Hamas in Gaza. We salute all our beloved Palestinian resistance factions in Palestine, no matter who they belong to. We tell them that the nation is with you, our hearts, minds, souls, our history, our guns and rockets, and all that we have is with you, because we are the resistance that was founded originally for you and for Palestine and Jerusalem. Israel returned fire, injuring several people around the town of Kafrachiba in Lebanon, from where our Middle East correspondent Quentin Somerville reports. The Israeli military post that sits atop a hillside overlooking the town of Kafrshua appeared undamaged by the Hezbollah attack. The Iranian-backed group, which fired artillery and rockets at the base and two other sites, has considerable firepower at its disposal, but this was a contained assault, a warning shot. Israel returned fire, striking olive groves around Kafrachiba. Later in the day, further strikes left several locals injured. They are being treated in hospital, the Lebanese army said. Hezbollah said today's attack was an act of solidarity with Palestinians. Like Hamas and Iran, it is committed to Israel's destruction. A senior official from the group said it would not remain neutral in any war and warned the United States and Israel to stop or face a wider regional conflict. Hezbollah is the dominant militant group in Lebanon, but there are many in the country that

oppose it. Still suffering from political paralysis, there is no president, and a shattering economic crisis, Lebanon is poorly placed to face another crisis. Quentin Somerville.

Still to come in the Global News Podcast. The real winners are the right-wing populists, and that would include the free voters, a relatively new party, and the AFD are the far right party, very controversial. We hear about the rise of the right in Germany's regional elections. Thousands of people in Western Afghanistan are spending a second night in the open after a strong earthquake on Saturday reduced entire villages to rubble. There's been confusion about the number of dead, with Taliban officials apologising for an earlier assessment that more than 2,000 people had died. The United Nations humanitarian agency says more than 1,000 have been killed, and more than 500 are still missing. Here's the BBC's South Asia correspondent, Yogita Lemay. More than a dozen villages in the Hirat province have been virtually flattened. An area that was earlier dotted with small single-story mud homes has been reduced to piles of brown rubble. Zindajan district, a rural area roughly 25 miles from Hirat city, was the epicentre of the earthquake. We came home and saw there was nothing left. Everything had turned to mud. We started to dig with shovels and whatever we had to rescue women and children from the rubble. One resident, Naik Mohammad said, villagers have been digging mass graves to bury the dead. For a people reeling under a severe crisis of hunger caused by years of war and drought, this is another devastating blow. With winter fast approaching, thousands of families are now without shelter. Hirat's main hospital, stretched thin even under normal circumstances, is struggling to treat the injured. Aid agencies are trying to help. The Taliban government says survivors urgently need food, drinking water, medicine, clothes and tents.

Yogita Lemay. Sunday was not a good day for the governing coalition of social democrats, greens and free democrats in Germany. In two regional elections in Bavaria and Hesse, all three parties did worse than at the last election. Much attention was paid to right-wing populist parties. The AFD gained voters in both regions, while the free voters who were part of the governing coalition in Bavaria also improved their share of the vote. I asked our correspondent in Germany, Damian McGinnis, if the populists are celebrating. I think to be honest, Alex, any of the right of centre parties of viewing today is a very good day for them. So what we're seeing in both Hesse and Bavaria is that the incumbent conservatives are likely able to stay in government, stay leading the government with coalition partners, particularly in Hesse. The conservatives have done extremely well with a clear boost of almost 10%. The conservatives who lead Bavaria, though, they've got a slight dip, but still it's the largest party. But the real winners, as you say, are the right-wing populists, and that would include the free voters, a relatively new party. They've scored a very good result in Bavaria. They would be described as hard right populists, really. And the AFD are the far right party, very controversial. That's shocked a lot of people here that in Bavaria, for example, combined the AFD vote and the free voter vote, you're basically talking about almost a third of voters. So 30% of voters voted for one of those two parties. And in Hesse, where the free voters don't do very well, but you do have the AFD, they've got their best result ever, and they came second. Was this fought on regional issues, or is this really a mid-telling off for the federal government? Yeah, I think it really was. Voters giving Olaf Scholz's national government a bashing, really. All three national governing parties have suffered in both regions. And it's interesting, because on paper, if you look at the figures, Germany's not doing that badly. Unemployment's very low. When you ask people in polls how they are doing personally, economically, people say, not actually not that badly. When you ask them

though how the country is doing, how the future looks, the mood is terrible. So I think there seems to be a lack of confidence in the government and a nervousness about the future. And I think that's something we've seen in today's results. Damien McGinnis in Germany. The National Museum of Wales has admitted it can't find nearly 2,000 items. Some of them thousands of years old. Last month, the National Library of Wales said it had lost track of 1,200 items. This report from Tularé Glen Jones in Cardiff. The almost 2,000 items missing from Amgueddfa Cymru, the National

Museum of Wales, include a small flint tool dating back to around 7,000 BC, a sword and an axe from

the Bronze Age, and a bracelet and ring from Roman times. They may only represent a small proportion of the collection, but Dr Kath Davis, the director of collections at the museum, is concerned. It does seem like a rather large number, and it is, but I think we also need to put that within the context of the 5.3 million objects that we care for at Amgueddfa Cymru. The number of missing items came to light after a freedom of information request by BBC Wales, and it's not thought that they've been stolen but rather mislaid. Opposition parties in Wales have called for better care to be taken and for more money from the Welsh Government to help protect national treasures. The Welsh Government say the management of the collections is up to the museum

itself. Tularé Glen Jones in Cardiff. Now let's return to our top story. Media reports from Israel now say an estimated 700 people have been killed since Palestinian Hamas militants launched a huge

offensive on Saturday. An official statement puts the number of Israelis taken hostage at more than 100. An Israeli military spokesman said that some Hamas forces remained on Israeli soil nearly two days after the fighting began. As the military response intensifies, Israeli residents are being evacuated from towns near the Gaza boundary. Speaking before a United Nations Urgent Security

Council emergency meeting, Gilad Erdan, the permanent representative of Israel to the UN, had this response. The past days have been devastating for each and every Israeli.

Israel suffered an unprecedented attack and the number of casualties is catastrophic.

My country has suffered hundreds of fatalities. This is Israel's 9-11 and Israel will do everything to bring our sons and daughters back home. We will not let the world forget the atrocities our country suffered. The number of Palestinians killed in the violence has also continued to climb. Health officials in Gaza say more than 400 people have died so far as Israel launches more airstrikes on the territory. The Israeli military has been warning people to leave areas. It's about to attack, but many of the casualties are reportedly civilians. People living in Gaza, which is densely populated, say conditions are dire. The Palestinian ambassador to the UN, Riyad Mansour, has said that there should be a peaceful solution to the conflict.

This is not a time to let Israel double down on its terrible choices. This is a time to tell Israel it needs to change course. That there is a path to peace where neither Palestinians nor Israelis are killed. The diplomatic community has been at pains to try to calm the situation. On Sunday, the US pledged more support for Israel, including sending its newest and most advanced aircraft carrier, as I heard from the BBC's North America correspondent, Shingai Nyokha, in Washington. There's been significant movement in the last couple of hours in relation to the US outlining the support that it had promised to Israel. The Pentagon has put out a statement.

It says, describing this as an initial emergency military support, as you mentioned, their aircraft carriers, as well as guided missile cruisers, guided missile destroyers that are headed from the western Mediterranean to the eastern Mediterranean, a journey of about a thousand miles. Now, the US has also said that it's going to increase its air force, the fighter aircraft, that will be going into bases in the Middle East, where they will be available for operations against Iran. But I think what's significant here is that the Defense Secretary, Lloyd Austin is saying, is that these are forces that the US maintains globally, and that they're being deployed there just as a deterrence posture, but clearly an escalation here. And in terms of the specific support for Israel, the US has said that it will deploy additional equipment and resources, including munition that is being airlifted to Israel. Some of that will be arriving today, but over the next couple of days, also there's an expectation that more consignment will arrive. And condemnation of the violence at the United Nations? Yes, the United Nations Secretary General earlier had expressed a specifically concern about the welfare of the citizens. But the UN Secretary General specifically wants a de-escalation of the situation, something that's not likely to happen now that there are more weapons that are being delivered to Israel. Shingai Nioka speaking to us from outside the White House in Washington. And that's all from us for now. But there'll 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 mixed by Darcy O'Bree, and the producer was Emma Joseph. The editor is Karen Martin. I'm Alex Ritzen. Until next time, goodbye.

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