

## [Transcript] Global News Podcast / Israel says ground operations are "expanding"

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Hello, I'm Oliver Conway. This edition is published in the early hours of Saturday, the 28th of October. Is this the start of Israel's ground invasion of Gaza?

The Israeli's step up air strikes and begin their biggest ground offensive since the Hamas attacks. Mobile phone and internet has been cut off. At the UN, the General Assembly votes overwhelmingly to call for an immediate humanitarian truce in Gaza, but the Israeli ambassador is outraged. Also in the podcast, officials in the US state of Maine lift a stay at home order following Wednesday's mass shooting and later. We are a better country because a reality that everyone knew about for many years, but nobody talked about has been made known.

An investigation in Spain reveals the scale of historic child sex abuse in the Catholic Church.

Nearly three weeks after Hamas fighters poured out of Gaza and went on a murderous rampage, Israel has launched its heaviest attacks yet on the Palestinian territory.

Flashes and explosions lit up the night sky as missiles rained down. Mobile phone networks and the internet were cut off. Perhaps more significantly, after two nights of probing raids into Gaza, the Israeli military said it was stepping up its ground attacks. Daniel Higari is the Israeli Army spokesman. In the last few hours, we've intensified the attacks in Gaza. The air force has been conducting extensive strikes on tunnels and other terrorist infrastructure. And in addition to the attacks carried out in the last few days, ground forces are expanding their operations tonight. The military is operating powerfully on all dimensions in order to achieve the goals of the war. Hamas's armed wing later confirmed it was engaged in combat with Israeli forces. Israel once again told residents of Gaza City in the north of the strip to move south for their own safety. Our international editor Jeremy Bowen in Jerusalem gave this assessment to Lewis Vaughan

Some responses come in to the Israeli actions. The Palestinian Authority, which is the rival Palestinian group to Hamas, has called this unhinged aggression. There are some who are hoping internationally and in Israel that perhaps the PA could be persuaded to, at a future date, take over in Gaza if and when Israel managed to get rid of Hamas there. They certainly have been saying consistently they don't want to go in there on the back of an Israeli tank.

One question in my mind was, is this going to be the big invasion that everybody's talking about? And what they seem to be doing is to be trying to go into the north, maybe consolidate there and perhaps then move further south. So Regev said they will continue to be on the receiving end of our military blows until we have dismantled their military machine and dissolved their political structure in Gaza. When this is over, Gaza will be very different. So based on what he's saying there, he seems to have answered my question to myself about whether this is the ground invasion. Absolutely seems to be, because he's saying this will continue until they've achieved their objectives. And just to remind you, the stated Israeli objective, which has come from many ministers in the government and the Prime Minister too, I think the phrase is something like, wipe Hamas off the face of the earth. And we heard the IDF spokesperson talking about the increase in intensification, but attacked specifically on underground Hamas targets, terrorist infrastructure. Can you just talk us through how that happens? Hamas have been digging

tunnels by common consent and also by some have been seen and some of the hostages, the four who got out, talked about that, that they've been digging this network of tunnels. Some people say it could be hundreds of kilometres long under this very small area. The Israelis did a briefing this afternoon where they said there were even bunkers underneath the main hospital in Gaza city, Shifa, where thousands of people have taken refuge. The Israelis say that includes quite a lot of the Hamas people who went over the border, those gunmen who went over their killing and taking hostages. So Israel says it's going after these bunkers. Now, what they're also going to be doing is massively increasing the level of military action of violence directed at the Gaza Strip. And while Israel has said to people in the northern part of the Gaza Strip that they need to leave and go south and a lot of people have, a lot of people haven't too. And because humanitarian conditions in the south where the Israelis have let in very few supplies, because of the lack of facilities there, some people have gone back up north to their homes. So there are lots of civilians in that area where they're operating who must be having an extremely terrifying and and rough night and there will undoubtedly be even heavier civilian casualties than they've been up to now in the three weeks of bombing. Now, that is important not just because it's the loss of life, it's important too because of the effect it has in driving the responses to the conflict. And the very heavy number of Palestinians who've been killed by Israel, I think has, for some, even among Israel's allies, has eroded the legitimacy of what they're doing. Perhaps that's why Israel has decided finally to act on the ground because they sensed, I think, that the mounting casualty figures were bringing up more and more pressure for a ceasefire. Jeremy Bowen in Jerusalem. While the exact details of what's happening in Gaza aren't known, our correspondent in southern Israel Lucy Williamson told us it was clear that the Israeli bombardment is gaining momentum. Well here in Ashkelon we have been witnessing this intensification of the bombardment of Gaza and it does feel like an intensification. There was another explosion just a couple of minutes ago. We've heard them all through tonight. Explosions, aerial bombardment of Gaza, some of them louder than usual. We've heard planes going back and forth over the town of Ashkelon all this evening. Again, they're still passing overhead every minute or two at the moment and there have been sirens here as well tonight several times. Warning of rockets incoming from Gaza being fired towards Ashkelon. Most of those are intercepted by Israel's defenses but two of them did manage to get through and hit a residential area here in Ashkelon. That was confirmed that in fact the city amongst others is being targeted so it does feel like there is an intensification underway but as you say information from the ground in Gaza isn't entirely clear and in fact the Israeli army hasn't been entirely clear about its aims on the ground in Gaza either. It has said it's intensifying airstrikes and it said it's expanding ground operations but exactly what that means isn't entirely clear. How big a ground offensive that might mean whether it's targeted raids or whether it's the start of something much wider. They have set out some clear goals for a military operation. They said they want to destroy Hamas as a military unit and also its power to govern. They want to eradicate it but beyond that it's very difficult to get a clear sense of what the plan is for the day after and as I say even at the moment there's speculation about if and when a major ground offensive might start Israel certainly seems to have been preparing for one with hundreds of thousands of troops lined up along its borders but even that at the

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moment is still largely speculation. We don't have any confirmation from Israel's army about what it's planning to do on the ground tonight. Newsy Williamson in Ashkelon in southern Israel. For its part Hamas has called on the world to quote act immediately to stop the Israeli bombardments.

The Israeli offensive in Gaza also triggered protests in the other Palestinian territory the occupied West Bank. Meanwhile on the diplomatic front the Jordanian foreign minister warned Israel that an invasion of Gaza would spell quote catastrophe for years. At the UN more than 100 nations voted to support a resolution from Arab countries to call for an immediate humanitarian truce. The Palestinian ambassador to the UN read man saw welcome the move. The General Assembly

prevailed and sent the appropriate message not only to the Palestinian people that there is justice and fairness and international humanitarian law upheld by the General Assembly but also it

sent the message to everyone enough is enough this war has to stop the carnage against our people has to stop. Only 14 countries voted against the resolution and the Israeli ambassador Gilad Erdan said the UN had failed in its duty. Today is a day that will go down in infamy. We have all witnessed that the UN no longer holds even one ounce of legitimacy or relevance. This organization was founded in the wake of the Holocaust for the purpose of preventing atrocities. Yet the spectacle we just saw proves beyond a doubt that the UN is committed sadly tragically not to preventing but ensuring further atrocities. We got more details from our correspondent at the UN in New York, Netta Taufik. It's important to remember that the General Assembly is where the weight of world opinion is really reflected because every nation has the same weight of vote. There's no vetoes and that's very different to say the Security Council where five permanent members do have veto power and so when a decision is made by the General Assembly it has political

weight, moral weight. So I think that is the significance on one hand on the other because it's not legally binding. They don't have the same kind of consequential outcomes that Security Council resolutions can have and so while many are celebrating those who supported this resolution, the outcome, they do know that it's not likely to change Israel's course on the ground on its own. Give us a breakdown of who voted for or against and what that means for the relative support that Israel and the Palestinians have at the moment. Well where we really saw the divisions was the United States, Israel's staunchest ally voted against this. There was no real surprise there but then we saw also Canada, the UK and several European nations abstaining. Now Canada had put forward an amendment to the resolution that specifically condemned Hamas in name for the October 7th attacks and called for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages. Now the resolution did have language talking about freeing all civilians. It mentioned a grave concern about the region since the October 7th attacks but it didn't explicitly name Hamas. But the authors had argued successfully in the chamber because the amendment failed that they didn't blame Israel either so it was either blaming both Hamas and Israel in the in the text or keeping it strictly humanitarian. But several European nations did support it and we heard them talk about the importance of war itself as well having rules although everybody was unequivocal in condemning Hamas in their statements.

Netta Taufik in New York will bring you the latest developments in the Hamas-Israel conflict in our next edition of the Global News Podcast this time tomorrow. But if you go to your Global News

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podcast feed wherever you get your podcasts you'll find we have a special edition answering your questions about the war. Other news now and more than 200,000 people were abused by Catholic priests in Spain over the past decades. A similar number were abused by non-clerical members of the church. Those are both according to an independent commission in the country. The Catholic Church has already been rocked by abuse scandals in the US, France, Australia and elsewhere. But until recently the issue had been kept quiet in Spain and church leaders were criticized in the Ombudsman's report. Spain's acting Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said it was important that the abuse had finally been brought to light. It's a milestone in our country's democracy because what is not talked about does not exist. For many years many people have suffered because they could not report, explain themselves or make human dramas visible. We are a better country because a reality that everyone knew about for many years but nobody talked about, at least not in the terms that we're doing so today has been made known. Our Madrid correspondent Guy Hedgeko told me how the commission had worked out the estimate for the number of people abused by the church in Spain. They came to this figure by carrying out a poll on 8,000 Spaniards and asking them about their experiences of sexual abuse in relation to the Catholic Church. If you extrapolate the findings they have then you come to this figure of 230,000 Spaniards who would have been sexual abused during their childhood directly by members of the clergy. Now if you broaden that out to people who have suffered some kind of sexual abuse by members of the Catholic Church and also through its institutions such as schools then that number rises to around 440,000 people. We don't have an official response from the church yet. The Ombudsman did mention the fact that in some cases they had not cooperated and then he talked about the attitude of the church, the way it had handled these many thousands of cases over the decades and he said in so many cases they had downplayed these cases or tried to cover them up essentially. Now the Catholic Church has played an extremely important role in the running of the state not least during the Franco era. What sits image like at the moment and what's likely to happen to it as a result of this report? Well the Spanish Parliament which commissioned this report last year is due to debate the findings of this report in the coming weeks but I think that could be fairly crucial and it's interesting to look at the different attitudes of the different political parties. There was support for this report to be drawn up almost across the board with the exception of the far-right Vox party and that to a certain extent reflects what you see in Spanish society with regard to the Catholic Church that people on the left, the parties on the left tend to be much more critical of the Catholic Church than Spaniards on the right and the political parties on the right. So I think there will be a very lively debate about the findings of this report in Congress and the big question is what comes out of that? Will there be legislation that comes out of that or measures which have been recommended in this report? Guy Hedgeko in Madrid.

For nearly 48 hours police in the US state of Maine have been searching for an army reservist

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suspected of being behind a mass shooting at a bowling alley and bar and while the authorities say they are still looking for Robert Card they have lifted a stay-at-home order in Lewiston. At least 18 people were killed there and 13 others wounded in the shootings on Wednesday evening. The victims were aged between 14 and 76. They included many local deaf people who'd been attending

an event at the bar. Our correspondent Nomia Iqbal has the latest. So why rescind this order which takes effect from tomorrow if they don't think the public is at risk? Well the police think the answer is pretty straightforward in the sense that a lot of people in Lewiston and in the towns nearby like Lisbon and Bowdoin have been really frustrated and confused about what to do. Can they leave? Can they go to school? Can they go to college? Can they go and open their businesses? And so it's been a delicate balance for them to keep the public safe but also for people to just be able to get on with their lives. So that is why they've decided to rescind the stay-at-home order but what they're saying to people stay vigilant it's still dangerous out there because this gunman still hasn't been found. The search continues for him.

Yeah I mean there've been various rumors but take us through what we can say about the search. Well at the moment they are focusing on a specific part of the main river, the Andrew Scoggin River that goes through Maine. It's an area specific area where they found his car so they're focusing on that. Divers are going into the river. There were reports that he had left a suicide note so we know a note was found as a property linked to him and we asked in the press conference a short while ago was that a suicide note but they wouldn't confirm that so we still know clear it on that but as far as their concerns the search is still ongoing.

Nomia Iqbal are correspondent in Maine.

And still to come on the Global News podcast. Won't they get into trouble?

No no nothing to be tensed about.

Brother are you sure?

We take people daily so we know. An undercover BBC team investigates how people smugglers use social media to lure migrants. Before we move on here's Andrew Peach with news of the latest happy pod. Yes this week a study from Shanghai looking at how Tai Chi can help people with Parkinson's. A tortoise called Frank found roaming in the spinach fields of British Columbia in Canada. How the computer game football manager has helped the national side in the African nation of Guinea-Bissau and the happiest person in the happiest country on earth Finland. Please join me for half an hour of positive uplifting news stories in the happy pod available in this feed every Saturday. An update now on a story we brought you on Wednesday the devastation caused by the most powerful storm ever to strike Mexico's Pacific coast. Hurricane Otis slammed into the resort of Acapulco with winds of more than 260 kilometers an hour. In the immediate aftermath of the storm it was hard to get a clear picture from the affected area but we now know at least 27 people died. Looting has broken out and the Mexican president has promised government help. Rachel Wright reports. The ferocity of hurricane Otis caught everyone by surprise when it hit the once glamorous resort of Acapulco where the forecasters had predicted winds of around 90 kilometers

an hour. Instead they reached 260. The world meteorological organization described the hurricane as one of the most rapidly intensifying tropical cyclones on record. 80 percent of the resort's hotels were damaged and streets flooded. Videos showed facades of buildings ripped off and roads strewn with debris. Andra Maria Vaduva was in her apartment when hurricane Otis struck.

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After a couple of minutes of shaking the door I was able to open it. I walk into the hallway. I go to the living room and I literally see the couch going out the window. I was in shock and I was barefooted. There was glass everywhere. It was the wind was so powerful so intense.

The Ministry of Defense said 8,000 soldiers had been deployed to Acapulco and towns along the coast to help with the clear up. It's estimated that around one million people have been left without electricity and water. There are also reports of widespread looting. The Mexican government

said on Friday it had now restored 50 percent of the electricity service in Guerrero State, one of the country's poorest, and that it would be setting up an air bridge between Acapulco and Mexico City to evacuate stranded tourists.

Hundreds of thousands of people have left Pakistan this year to find better economic opportunities abroad. Many of them are lured by people smugglers advertising illegal routes to get to Europe on social media. A BBC team went undercover to speak to one of the smugglers. BBC Trending's Reha Kansara has this report.

There is nothing to be worried about brother. 18-year-olds, 12-year-olds, we also take guys this age. The thing is you have to be calm and composed.

You're listening to a people smuggler from Pakistan.

He's attempting to sell a route to Italy from Coyta in Pakistan to an undercover BBC journalist.

Won't they get into trouble? No, no, nothing to be tensed about.

Brother, are you sure? We take people daily, so we know. They cross the border on foot.

Then we take them in a truck and towards sitting in Iran.

This smuggler is just one of many operating out of the country, falsely promising people's safe passage to Europe and promoting illegal routes on social media. From Turkey to Italy, the smuggler says the so-called game, a term used to describe illicit journeys from Pakistan to Europe, will cost just over US\$7,000. We don't pay him, but he offers some advice on how to get to the UK. Brother, I can tell you that from Italy, people go to France, and from France, people execute games for London and elsewhere. We found him via a group on Facebook, which described itself as a travel agent. Its posts regularly link to a WhatsApp group with the same name, where, on the encrypted messaging app, smugglers and potential customers interact.

Even if he gets caught, he is only going to end up back at home. No one is going to kidnap him and ask for ransom. Can the smuggler's assurances be trusted, though? The risks are enormous for those

who take the illegal routes smugglers are offering. Hi, how are you?

Saeed, who I met in Italy, is a young man from Pakistani-administered Kashmir, who made the perilous journey to Europe by boat from Libya 10 months ago, after being held to ransom by the Libyan mafia.

When some of us tried to escape, they had surveillance cameras everywhere, and they caught us. They made us stand against a wall, and then they started beating us. Two of them would beat us so badly, we couldn't walk. After that, they stripped us of our clothes.

It felt as if it was the last day of my life. I thought they would kill us.

In total, he spent over US\$10,000 to get to Europe. Using the same smuggler, a friend used some months back. They told my brother they were charging more because it was a big ship, but that was a lie. It was a fishing boat.

We put our evidence to Metta and TikTok that their platforms are being used to promote

illegal people smuggling. Both companies took down almost all content we reported to them, and they say they are continuously looking for ways to remove this type of content.

Some days after we spoke to the smuggler, we ring him again, this time revealing we are BBC journalists. A colleague from BBC Urdu makes the call. You do know how dangerous this is, right?

The smuggler hangs up. In fact, days later, we find him advertising another illegal route to Europe. Clearly, a call from the BBC has not deterred him.

Now, it's not often that we get to speak to a double Olympic gold medallist, but the former captain of the Canadian women's ice hockey team, Cassie Campbell Pascal, joined me a little earlier to talk about a new BBC World Service podcast she's presenting called Amazing Sports Stories.

The first three episodes take us back to a young girl's battle for sporting equality in the 1980s in a miniseries called Frozen Out. This first story is about Justine Blaney, who is a great Canadian hockey player that fought to play boys hockey when she was around 12 years old, and she initially lost her case in the Ontario Supreme Court, but ended up winning her next case in the Court of Appeal in 1986. And it was a really big news story here in Canada, just about a young girl fighting to play boys hockey.

Now, you're an ice hockey player yourself. Is that what attracted you to that story?

Definitely. I mean, it was, I, Justine and I are the same age, and we actually played against each other. And, you know, I think at the time, just based on numbers, you know, boys got to have to play in better leagues. They had more teams to play against. There was teams maybe closer to people's homes, and it was a little bit more convenient at times to play. And there was a real sense that you had to prove that the girls game was good at this time. And I've got an opportunity to play with Justine over the years and get a chance to know her. But to honestly sit down and tell this story, I don't think I realized at the time all the things that she went through just to play hockey and to play with her brother and to play in the MTHL, which was close to her home. And for me, it was just about hearing what she went through to kind of push this through

the courts and being a young child in really what was an adult world of the legal system. And she stuck to her beliefs and she ended up eventually winning the appeal. And it's, it's a big story in our country. Cassie Campbell Pascal and amazing sports stories is available to download on BBC Sounds or wherever you get your BBC podcasts. Now it's thought that only humans and a few species of whale go through the menopause, but scientists have found that some chimpanzees living in Uganda's Kibali National Park experience it as well and can live for a lengthy period afterwards. Susan Albert says a professor of biology at Duke University in the United States. She spoke to James Menendez about how this study could be useful for us humans.

I think the paper is surprising, exciting and puzzling. If you had told me about this before I had seen the data, I would have been skeptical. Why would you have been skeptical? Was the consensus

before that menopause was just not part of chimpanzee's makeup? Maybe a good way to describe why

people might be skeptical is that we think of menopause as a trait that's pretty fixed within a species. Either a species shows it or a species doesn't show it. And what they've shown here is that there's variation among chimpanzee populations and the extent to which they show it. And that's

really exciting because even though it's puzzling, we don't understand why it would be the case. This is a potential model for what ancient humans might have looked like. If you cast back to human ancestors one or two million years ago, they too could have had variation among populations in the extent to which females showed this trait. And if there's variation in the extent to which a trait is exhibited, that means natural selection can act on it. In humans, it looks as though that happened and the trait became fixed. Ah, which brings us onto a very important question. Why would it be important for a species, for the females to go through the menopause? What might be the evolutionary benefit? In humans and also in killer whales and pilot whales, one is the grandmother hypothesis and the name of the hypothesis sort of says it all. It's that grandmothers can contribute more to their grand offspring than they can by having offspring late in their life that may be vulnerable to problems of survival just because the mom is aged. The other hypothesis is that as females age, they're increasingly related to other individuals in their social group. And so by not producing offspring, they can assist kin that they're related to, you know, aunts, nieces, but not by providing direct care necessarily just by reducing competition. Now in humans, there's pretty good evidence for the grandmother hypothesis, I would say the evidence for reproductive competition is maybe a little bit more mixed. But in chimpanzees, neither of them seems entirely convincing, which is why this is such a wonderful puzzle. Susan Albert's talking to James Menendez. And that is all from us for now, but the Global News podcast will be back this time tomorrow. This edition was mixed by Joe McCartney and produced by Madeleine Drury, our editors Karen Martin. I'm Oliver Conway. Until next time, goodbye.