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

I'm Janet Jalil and in the early hours of Sunday, the 8th of October, these are our main stories.

Israeli airstrikes are continuing to pound the Gaza Strip after Palestinian militants

launched a major surprise attack on Saturday morning.

We get the latest from our correspondent in Jerusalem.

This day isn't over for the people of Gaza and the people of Israel.

So the bombardment continues in the Gaza Strip.

But more importantly for the Israeli government,

they are still fighting on the borders of the Gaza Strip.

Hundreds of people are reported to have been killed on both sides of the conflict

and dozens of Israelis have been taken hostage.

We're the friend coming over that checked if we're okay and his teenage son saw a friend of us that she's nearly 15 going in Gaza Strip with a four-year-old sister.

In other news, a powerful earthquake has destroyed villages and killed dozens of people in Western Afghanistan.

As we record this podcast, Israeli soldiers and civilians are being held hostage after an unprecedented attack by Palestinian militants on Israel.

The group Hamas claims to have taken more than 50 people after breaking through the heavily fortified barrier that has enclosed the Gaza Strip for years.

Israel responded by sending dozens of warplanes to strike targets in Gaza

and as we record this podcast, they're continuing to pound the densely populated territory.

Hundreds of people are reported to have died on both sides of the conflict,

with many hundreds more wounded.

This resident of a destroyed building in Gaza struck a defiant tone. It's a price we have to pay. We have no problem with this, even if they strike us every day and our families have to sleep in the streets. This debris will turn into shrapnel, which we will fire at them. As Israeli forces continue to fight Palestinian gunmen who've infiltrated towns, mainly in the south, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the army would take a mighty vengeance and wipe out Hamas. Since this morning, the state of Israel has been at war. Our first objective is to clear out enemy forces that infiltrated and restore the security and quiet to communities that have been attacked. The second objective, at the same time, is to an exact and immense price from the enemy within the Gaza Strip too. But Ghazi Hamad, a spokesman for Hamas, told the BBC the organization's current offensive was a response to years of what he called a brutal occupation by Israel. Thousands of Palestinians were killed in Gaza, civilians, women and children. We were fighting for 75 years in the occupation, but no one listened to us. PLO had long negotiations with Israel, but Israel continued to do all kinds of crimes. The international community should focus on the occupation, which is the longest occupation in the world. Just before recording this podcast, I got the latest from Joe Floto in Jerusalem. This day isn't over for the people of Gaza and the people of Israel, so the bombardment continues in the Gaza Strip. But more importantly, for the Israeli government, they are still fighting on the borders of the Gaza Strip to retake some of their military posts that were overrun dramatically this morning by hundreds of Hamas militants. There is also an ongoing hostage situation in two of the small towns next to the border. We understand in one of them 50 people are being held in the dining room of a kibbutz. That's a small agricultural community, and they're still trying to resolve that. But we are no nearer to knowing the fate of dozens, we understand, of military and civilian hostages who've been taken. And we think many of them are now back in Gaza, and Hamas are saying they are all being hidden away, and they will do a deal eventually to release their own prisoners who are in Israeli prisons. And these Israeli hostages are going to complicate Israel's response despite Mr Nesnyahu's war rhetoric. Absolutely. Well, look, I mean, it hasn't inhibited them this evening. As you'll be aware, you know, we are more than 200 dead in Gaza at the moment, and the bombardment has been severe. We are told by the military in Israel that they are convening thousands of troops in the area. So they are running an ongoing operation now to clear out the last remaining militants who've infiltrated Israel, but they are preparing for what they say is going to be a substantial

ground offensive. That will take time to plan, and of course,

ultimately, the thoughts of what happens to those hostages in any such event will be foremost in everyone's mind.

And there are huge questions for Israeli military and intelligence.

Completely. This took them by surprise.

So on the intelligence front, this was something they were supposed to be able to predict, but they didn't. But once this whole thing had started,

what has shocked many Israelis, and certainly many former military commentators as well, is just how long it took the Israeli military to react.

So we've heard from Israeli civilians trapped inside these towns, complaining that they've been left alone for 12 hours sometimes before any military assistance came.

And that gives you a sense of just how unprepared the military was for this kind of event, but also just how shocked they were and how many losses they incurred

when militants attacked in force simultaneously at several military bases along the Gaza Strip.

And that left them with very little capacity to respond quickly

when civilians were being overrun and taken hostage.

So huge questions being asked, all of which have been acknowledged already,

but they will put that to one side now because there is a more urgent task ahead of them,

which is, according to the Prime Minister, to strike Gaza hard

and to destroy Hamas's capacity and capability to do this.

And we've seen Israel deeply divided for months, but now

the government of national unity is being formed to deal with this unprecedented crisis.

Yeah, and that gives you a sense of just what a shock and what a crisis this is.

The people who are joining this unity government include the opposition leaders,

Benny Gantz and Yaya Lapid, both of whom are no fans of Benjamin Netanyahu.

They are arch rivals and there is no love lost between them in ordinary times,

but these are not ordinary times.

And you quite rightly point out that Israel has rarely been this divided politically, probably never in its history.

And we've had nine months of rolling street protests with tens and hundreds of thousands of people taken to the streets in opposition to Benjamin Netanyahu and the plans he has for reforming the judiciary in this country and therefore the control and checks and balances on democracy.

But all of that has been put to one side, given the scale of what happened today.

Joe Floto in Jerusalem.

Israeli towns and kibbutzim close to the border with Gaza bore the brunt of Saturday's attack. Let's hear first from the kibbutz of Gavim.

Julian Marshall spoke to Bar Mitzrahi, a young medical student,

who spent the day with his family in a safe room in their house

to escape the gunman roaming the streets.

Some people may find the following distressing.

So far, we managed to push them away.

We already have people, armed civilians, the militiamen going from home to home and check if everybody is okay.

We already have an IDF presence inside the kibbutz

and we are pushing them away, the armed terrorists, yes. This is very different, isn't it, Bar, from what it was earlier in the day when you could actually hear gunfire and people walking around outside? So we had a lot of gunfires. We are thankful for the people that guard the kibbutz that they managed to push them away. But we had a lot of really bad stories coming after our last conversation. My 81-year-old good friend of my mom, she got murdered inside a shelter. She didn't lock the door because we are not used to lock the door in the kibbutzes. And I just arrived in a shelter in Spott. We have a lot of friends that are starting to get, we're starting to get a report about friends that are missing and it's been to a rave also, friends of mine that we're trying to defend the kibbutzes. Some of them are right now, we start to get a lot of really bad news. We are still in the fog of a battle but it seems that they kidnapped a lot of teenagers and moms and young children from the kibbutz nearby. We had a friend coming over that he checked if we were okay and his teenage son saw a friend of ours that she is nearly 15, going in Gaza Street with a four-year-old sister. Israeli medical student Bar Mitzrahi. Well. it's here now from Gaza where in addition to the airstrikes, Israel has cut off the electricity to the Hamas-controlled territory. Mohamed Omarouish is a journalist there. We are horrified by the sounds that are coming closer by the minute. Literally nowhere is safe. We are speaking about six hours of continued and persistent confrontations, military confrontations across the borders as well as in the Gaza Strip. So it is becoming catastrophic by the minute. And how are you managing without electricity, which you say is now being cut? It's just very crucial. It's my lifeline to keep providing my narrative and my stories to the outside world. It's very crucial as well to keep on providing the necessary services for average citizens as well. I'm speaking about the internet. I'm speaking also about the generators, not only for residential compounds, but also hospitals and health care institutions. This is military tactic that Israel has used previously to cut off several places from the Gaza Strip. It's the only source for people to keep on updated as the news are happening and also as they are trying to seek shelter at homes. Are people in Gaza aware of Hamas' attacks inside Israel today? And if so, what's been their reaction?

There's been widespread reactions from Palestinians in Gaza to the attacks that are taking place across the borders.

On one side, I can confirm Palestinians are having this widespread sense of fear and concern at the same time as they are anticipating a longer and a very larger in-scale and intensity Israeli counter-attack.

That was Mohammed Mawish in Gaza speaking to Julian Marshall.

Well, there's a particular sense of shock in Israel that Hamas has managed to take so many people hostage.

The former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, speaking to my colleague Samantha Simmonds late

on Saturday, said he was horrified by the way the militants had targeted civilians.

This is the worst terror attack on Israel in our history.

At 6.30 a.m. Israel time, Hamas in an unprovoked and heinous method came and attacked our communities.

Killed women, children, men kidnapped.

We don't know the precise number.

And as we're speaking right now, there are still over a dozen live kidnapped and terror attacks going on in the southern parts of Israel.

What more can you tell us about those ongoing operations at the moment?

Well, they're very complex because we're talking about civilians.

We're talking about several hostage situations.

Throughout the day, I myself was talking to folks who are behind the doors and can hear

the terrorists from just outside their door, maybe two or three meters away.

And, you know, some of them are keeping silent and have to keep their own babies from crying. It's reminiscent of other days, other very dark days.

This is an unprovoked deliberate attack on the state of Israel.

So the state of Israel is at war.

We're at war with a terror state of Hamas in Gaza.

And it'll continue as long as it needs to.

When you say you were talking to people in live situations, can you expand on that?

Tell us who you spoke to and what they were saying, what they were experiencing.

Just a few minutes ago, I was talking to a woman in one of the kibbutzim,

one of the kibbutz on the southern part of Israel.

And right now, there are terrorists walking around her kibbutz trying to enter any home.

All the homes are locked, but they're burning up some of the homes.

And her own parents were murdered, her mom and dad.

Her brother is in a different apartment.

And she's very worried about him right now.

So that's one example.

Another example is another woman that has a baby.

And she's been stuck with him since 6am.

And she's running out of food and the baby's crying.

And she's afraid that the noise that the baby will make

will gain the attention of terrorists.

So we're trying to help our commandant forces and our special forces to get there

and defend and kill the terrorists. The former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. The UN Security Council will discuss the conflict at an emergency meeting on Sunday. There's been widespread international condemnation of the Palestinian attack. In an address from the White House, President Biden, whose own relationship with Mr Netanyahu has been frosty, pledged full US support for Israel. Israel has the right to defend itself and its people, full stop. There's never justification for terrorist attacks. And my administration's support for Israel's security is rock solid and unwavering. Let me say this as clearly as I can. This is not a moment for any party hostile to Israel to exploit these attacks to seek advantage. The world is watching. I also correspondent in Washington, Barbara Pletasha, what this unwavering US support for Israel means in practical terms. It means intensive engagement at every level, as we've just had an administration official describe to us. There'd be close, and this is, and will continue to be close coordination between intelligence teams, coordination between militaries. Israel is, of course, already heavily armed by the Americans, but the Defense Secretary, Austin, has called this counterpart to see what needs they anticipate now. They're flooding the diplomatic zone, the Americans, not just in terms of calls with the Israelis, but also counterparts in regional countries to try and prevent this conflict from spreading wider throughout the region. They've been on the phone at every level. And Mr Biden said that he would stay in personal contact with Mr Netanyahu. And I think, crucially, what it means in the near term anyway is that the Americans will give the Israelis the space to do what they want to do, what they feel they need to do, which most likely means a ground invasion of Gaza. I think you will not hear American criticisms or calls to stop. Any military operation for a while, they seem to be saying that the Israelis should decide what to do and then give them the space to do it. And what's the impact of all this on the Biden administration's efforts to get Arab nations to normalize ties with Israel? Well, the administration has been focusing its diplomacy on trying to get normalization in particular

between Israel and Saudi Arabia,

which would be a huge realignment in the region and would need to include concessions to the Palestinians. And there have already been discussions about that. So all of that's out the window for now, or at least it's been put on hold while everyone's dealing with trying to contain and to end the conflict. The administration official said that those talks had a way to go, but he did say that Hamas would not be able to derail the outcome. Analysts have been a bit more circumspect. They've said they might not necessarily come to a grinding halt, but how things play out could affect what's achievable. Barbara Pletusha. Many in Israel have compared Hamas' assault to the 9-11 attacks on the U.S. or to the war almost 50 years ago to the day when Israel's enemies, this time Arab states, also launched a surprise attack. Our chief international correspondent, Lise Doucette, told us that this latest incursion would also leave a deep impact on Israel's psyche. Israel's history is one of all too many wars ever since the establishment of the state of Israel. Wars like the 1973 Yom Kippur War are seared in memory. So is the Six-Day War of 1967. And so too will this war, because this is a war that we're hearing today from Israelis that they have never seen this in living memory. The audaciousness, the scale of the Palestinian attack, the number of hostages were waiting for that to be confirmed, but above 50, civilians and soldiers. The incursions of armed gunmen into southern Israel for Israelis to say they looked out the window and saw armed Palestinians running through their streets. Both sides are now saying they want to make the enemy pay. And this moment is also to use the word of the day unprecedented, because the political situation is very different from the other complexes, escalation of hostilities that we've seen all too often. There's a very right wing Israeli government. There is on the Palestinian side deep, deep anger with Israeli policies, with the rising tensions in the occupied West Bank. We've reported them.

You've reported them in recent months in Jenin and in Nablus, but also deepening dissolution with their own leadership, particularly the Palestinian Authority. That means at this moment, as dangerous as it is now, it's fraught with even more danger, because both sides are going to try to resolve this with everything at their disposal. Are we talking about Israeli forces going in on the ground? Are we talking about Israel reoccupying Gaza? In previous tensions, Israel-Gaza wars, as they're called, Gaza-Israel-Israel-Gaza, Israel made incursions into Gaza, but they never went in with a full-scale invasion, keeping troops on the ground, reoccupying. What we have heard from Israel today is that preparations are in place for a ground invasion. We haven't heard that the signal has been given. We haven't heard that it will happen, but it is on the table. Please do set. Now, to some other news. Hundreds of people are feared dead after a powerful earthquake hit Western Afghanistan. The authorities in Herat province said several villages had been completely destroyed. Here's our South Asia regional editor, Ambrasan Esirajan. A disaster management worker said more than a thousand injured people had been taken to hospital. With communications down and difficulty in accessing remote regions, the local authorities are struggling to estimate the number of casualties. The guake had a magnitude of 6.3 and was followed by several strong aftershocks. There have been reports of landslides in some rural and mountainous areas. Ambrasan Esirajan, another official in Russian-occupied Ukraine, has been killed. Vladimir Malov represented the United Russia party in the town of Novakhovka. He's the latest of a number of officials who've helped the Russian occupation and subsequently been assassinated. Our Europe regional editor, Paul Mos reports. Vladimir Malov was killed by a car bomb. Others have been shot, hanged or stabbed.

in the area of Ukraine. It occupies. Mr Malov served as local executive secretary for the United Russia party, which supports President Putin. His death was described by the regional governor as a terrorist attack. The Ukrainian authorities haven't said anything about this latest murder, they rarely do. But Kyiv does sometimes hint that their forces were responsible and many will assume they carried out this killing. Paul Mos, the US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer has accused Chinese companies of fueling the opioid drug addiction epidemic in America. He was speaking on a visit to China. Ben Loewings reports. Mr Schumer emphasized he was not blaming the Chinese government for the fentanyl crisis, but rather Chinese companies. The Democratic senator spoke alongside the local Communist Party secretary after talks in Shanghai, where thousands of US-supported businesses operate. Mr Schumer has argued that American firms are finding it increasingly difficult to operate since Washington limited chip exports to China over fears about national security. Ben Loewings, now let's return to our main story. As we record this podcast, Israeli airstrikes are continuing to pound the Gaza Strip after Palestinian militants launched a major surprise attack on Saturday morning. Hundreds of people are reported to have been killed on both sides and dozens of Israelis taken hostage in one of the biggest escalations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for years. So what does this attack by Hamas mean for the region? With his thoughts, here's our international editor, Jeremy Bone. A new war has been a clear and growing danger for months, but no one expected Hamas to attack the way it has out of Gaza. Israelis and Palestinians have been focusing on the West Bank, the occupied territory between Jerusalem and the Jordanian border, where there's been almost continuous violence throughout the year. Religious and national tension ever present in Jerusalem

has risen in the last week or so in the Holy City, but the extent of the Hamas operation shows that it had been planned over months. The reasons why Hamas in Israel are once again at war run very deep, even when the conflict drops out of the headlines, grievance and hatred simmer. The last serious attempt by the Americans to restart a peace process failed a decade ago. For a while in the 1990s, the prospect of peace through creating an independent Palestine alongside Israel was a real hope. Now the so-called two-state solution is an empty slogan. At the root of the trouble is the unresolved, century-long conflict between Arabs and Jews for control of land both sides want. What is happening now proves yet again that when it's left to fester, bloodshed is guaranteed. Jeremy Bowen And that's all from us for now. but there will be a new edition of the Global News Podcast later. If you want to comment on this podcast, you can send us an email. The address is globalpodcastatbbc.co.uk. You can also find us on X at Global NewsPod. This edition was mixed by Stephen Bailey, the producer was Lea McChefrey, the editor is Karen Martin. I'm Jeanette Jalil. Until next time, goodbye. That world has eaten up and spit out a lot of young and attractive guys. This is the story of one of fashion's dark secrets. I was overwhelmed. Like, I had never seen anything like this. At the height of Abercrombie and Fitch's success. This was me being carefully manipulated. Being lied too tricked and traded like a commodity. Investigating allegations that would take me into a world of money, sex and power. This is World of Secrets. Season one, The Abercrombie Guys. Listen, wherever you get your podcasts.