

Hello, this is the Global News Podcast from the BBC World Service with reports and analysis from across the world. The latest news seven days a week. BBC World Service podcasts are supported by advertising. This is the Global News Podcast from the BBC World Service. I'm Valerie Sanderson and in the early hours of Friday the 20th of October these are our main stories. Signs that Israel is preparing to invade the Gaza Strip. The battle will be a tough one. We will be precise, sharp, fatal, but there will be a price. We will pay that price and we will continue until we complete the mission. The UN agency UNRA says much more is required than the 20 trucks of aid planned to enter Gaza on Friday. The human internal corridor needs to be uninterrupted, needs to be predictable. We will need at least 100 trucks a day. Also in this podcast one of Donald Trump's lawyers pleads guilty to her role in attempting to overturn the result of the 2020 election and the man who took such desperate measures to avoid paying for restaurant meals that he's landed up behind bars. There are signs that Israel is readying itself for a ground invasion of the Gaza Strip. Jordan has warned it fears the worst. The Israeli Defence Minister told troops on the border with Gaza that they will soon see the Palestinian enclave from inside while carrying out their objective to destroy Hamas after gunmen from the group killed 1400 Israelis and took more than 200 hostages earlier this month. The order will come, Yav Galant said, adding that Hamas had to be defeated whatever the cost. I'm responsible for the defence establishment. I'm also responsible for leading it to victory in the battle. The battle will be a tough one. We will be precise, sharp, fatal, but there will be a price. We will pay that price and we will continue until we complete the mission. Thursday saw another day of airstrikes by Israel on Gaza. With more details here's Paul Adams in Jerusalem. Israel's relentless round-the-clock bombardment of the Gaza Strip goes on. Apartment blocks in one of Gaza City's more affluent neighbourhoods under attack today. One local news agency said another senior Hamas military leader had been killed, along with members of his family, elsewhere in the city. Outside a hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, the chaotic, anguished aftermath of yet another airstrike, the injured arriving in ambulances and pickup trucks. They were children, a man cries, all children. For the overcrowded hospitals, this is already unbearable. At the Kuwaiti specialist hospital in Raffa, the only surgeon, Suhaib Al-Hams, said they were receiving scores of dead and injured. Gaza's health system, he said, was collapsing, hospitals shutting down. And Israel's widely anticipated ground invasion has not even begun. Visiting troops massing on the border today, Israel's defense minister, Joav Galant, said they would soon see Gaza from inside. The command, he said, would come. Paul Adams. The British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, spent the day in Israel and Saudi Arabia. He told Benjamin Netanyahu that the UK would stand with Israel in what he called its darkest hour. On Thursday night, Dining Street said the Prime Minister and the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, had agreed on the need to avoid any further escalation in the region.

With his assessment of what Mr. Sunak is trying to achieve is our political editor, Chris Mason. Showing physical solidarity with Israel, as it was put to me, turning up, mattered to Downing Street.

Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged it mattered to Israel too.

The two men spoke for two hours, mostly tete-a-tete.

Diplomatic jargon with a French twist for when officials leave the room and leave it to the leaders to talk one on one.

Downing Street said that Rishi Sunak used his meeting with Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman

to urge him to use Saudi's leadership in the region to support stability now and in the long term.

His role in potentially dampening the burning anger on all sides is seen as crucial.

Chris Mason.

In Gaza, the health authorities say more than 3,400 people have now died in the territory.

And for the 2.3 million civilians living there, they are fast running out of everything.

Food, medicine, water and fuel.

As international pressure grows to allow aid in,

state media in Egypt is reporting that the Gaza border crossing will be opened for several hours on Friday.

The head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adalem Gebreyesus, says they are ready and waiting.

We welcome Israel's announcement yesterday that it will not block the entry of water, food and medicines into Gaza from Egypt.

Fuel is also needed for hospital generators, ambulances and desalination plants.

And we urge Israel to add fuel to the life-saving supplies allowed to enter Gaza.

Our trucks are loaded and ready to go.

In Cairo, the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for rapid, unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza.

One of his officials, with responsibility for Palestinian refugees, has been speaking to our international editor, Jeremy Bone.

Before this war, around 500 lorry loads of goods came into Gaza every day.

President Biden talked about 20 trucks a day

when he persuaded Israel to allow aid shipments into Gaza from Egypt.

Many more will be needed to make any dent in the humanitarian disaster inside the Gaza Strip, according to the UN agency known as UNRWA, which looks after Palestinian refugees.

Its Commissioner General, Philippe Blazzarini, explained.

We are calling for an humanitarian corridor,

but the humanitarian corridor needs to be uninterrupted, needs to be predictable.

We will need at least 100 trucks a day.

If we cannot bring fuel, and we have to bring the water in the bottom, we will need much, much more.

I asked Mr. Blazzarini about Israel's decision to put Gaza under siege.

This amount to collective punishment and collective punishment is a violation of international humanitarian law.

Israel has gone through a traumatic event.

I condemn this barbaric massacre.

But this event still does not justify that a war is conducted without any restraint.

Mr. Blazzerini repeated the UN Secretary-General's call for a humanitarian ceasefire.

The Middle East, he said, was on the edge of an abyss.

Jeremy Boen.

As Israel gears up for its ground offensive,

what will be the plight of more than 200 Israeli and foreign hostages

who were kidnapped during the Hamas attack and are being held in Gaza?

There is anger not just about their precarious fate,

but also about the security failure on October the 7th.

Some blame the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu,

whose attempts to weaken the judiciary in the face of corruption charges

led to months of huge protests.

So can he survive politically?

Dan Johnson has been gauging opinion on the streets of Tel Aviv.

On the pavement across from Israel, defence forces, headquarters,

there are families camped here, essentially, in vigil, calling for hostages to be released.

There are banners saying, bring our children home.

And one says, Bibi, resign now. That's the Prime Minister.

And Ellie and Shira Ulberg are waiting here for news of their 18-year-old daughter,

Liri, who was last seen in a video as she was being abducted and taken to Gaza.

Liri like music. She's seen all the time. She has lots of friends.

She's 18 years old, but she's my little baby. And I want her back. I want to hug her.

I want her back home.

Who do you hold responsible for not keeping her safe?

My country. My country and all over the world,

because all the time we say Hamas is a terrorist organisation. Nobody listen.

War time often brings leaders more public support, but opinion polls here

are showing that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu,

Bibi's popularity has fallen considerably.

Shlomit Kubna hasn't heard from her friend Mayana HersHKovitz

since a text message was sent at 11.15 last Saturday saying she was hiding from attackers

and that the military still hadn't arrived to save them.

I want the general to look on my eyes, see that we are in pain, and they are responsible for it.

The general and Benjamin Netanyahu.

You think they should resign?

After. Now we need them.

And what about the Prime Minister?

I don't see any way he and his government can stay.

The pain is so bad, he won't be the Prime Minister.

Now these streets have echoed with unrest for much of this year

because of opposition to the Prime Minister's plans to extend his own power

and that of parliament by removing some judicial oversight,

the checks and balances of Israel's Supreme Court.

At one point there were thousands of volunteer servicemen and women threatening to refuse to serve because of the sense democracy was being undermined and that division still runs deep.

Cars just drawn up here and a man shouted at the families that this has all happened because there have been so many protests here over the last few months.

There's a crowd gathering around the car now, a woman is shouting at him.

She's clearly against BB, Benjamin Netanyahu.

The police are getting involved, more people gathering around.

He's doing it, BB the king and BB the best man in the world and I can't bury it.

I wish to take BB instead of the children.

My name is Ada, I'm here because I want to support the families.

It's not a strong government.

It just got weaker and weaker and weaker and unable to do anything and we see that now and it's not only the last 10 months of demonstrations and division, it's years and years in the making.

Now the families, friends and their supporters are all regrouping together in prayer.

And this is an old Israeli song about guarding over the country and its children.

Not many people want a change of leader right now, not during a war.

But there is a strong sense that after all this, there will be serious calls for significant change.

Dan Johnson, now let's take you back to Wednesday

and that whirlwind trip to Israel by the US President Joe Biden.

When he stepped off the plane, he was greeted warmly by Prime Minister Netanyahu and both men embraced.

Later that day, during a speech in Tel Aviv,

Mr. Biden promised that the US would ensure Israel had what it needs to protect the country and defend its people.

But he also pleaded with Israelis not to allow anger to cloud crucial decision making in a time of war.

Justice must be done, but I caution this while you feel that rage.

Don't be consumed by it.

After 9-11, we were in rage in the United States.

While we sought justice and got justice, we also made mistakes.

I'm the first year as President to visit Israel in time of war.

I've made wartime decisions.

I know the choices are never clear or easy for the leadership.

There's always cost.

It requires asking very hard questions.

It requires clarity about the objectives and an honest assessment about whether the path you're on will achieve those objectives.

Richard Haas is a senior member of the US foreign policy establishment.

He ran the council for foreign relations,

and much of his career was devoted to crises in the Middle East.

Owen Bennett Jones asked him whether Israel's stated objective to destroy Hamas is even possible.

It's understandable, but I don't think it's possible.

I think the nature of Hamas is as much a movement and ideology as it is an organization, plus almost a borrow from Donald Rensfeld.

I think the process of destroying it will probably generate new recruits for it.

So I think a much smarter Israeli policy would be to degrade it and to build up much better defenses against it rather than go on the errand of trying to eliminate it.

I think what the President did was try to thread the needle on his trip.

Be very supportive of Israel.

On the other hand, I think what he was essentially trying to do was temper their ambitions and be cautionary.

The comparisons to 9-11, shall we say, are not accidental.

United States in many ways overreached after 9-11, creating as many problems as it solved.

And I think that's what essentially he was saying to Israel.

Don't let your emotions here run away from you.

So that is one set of issues.

You know, the immediate war objectives, if you like.

But I think some Arab governments, I think they're saying there has to be a longer term solution, political solution to the Palestinian issue.

Do you think that's right?

Absolutely.

I don't think though Hamas is part of that because any conceivable solution involves peaceful coexistence with Israel.

So that rules Hamas out.

But obviously there are Palestinians now and historically who have essentially been willing to coexist with Israel.

And I agree.

I think it's necessary if this is ever going to be resolved.

But I don't think the moment's ripe for it.

I think what we have to do is first stabilize the situation, let passions calm somewhat.

But I don't disagree with your point at all.

What you're saying is that you can even start a process for probably a year or two.

You need a new Israeli government.

The previous government was opposed to any concessions.

The current government is a war government.

So yes, you'd need a debate in Israel, an election, a new government.

I think on the Palestinian side, you've got a real problem.

Hamas, again, has ruled itself out.

And the West Bank, you really don't have a partner.

They're not strong enough.

It's not clear to me they have the capability.

So what Israel and the United States are going to have to think about is how do they create a context in which a Palestinian partner emerges?

So much of Israel's recent history has been to undermine a Palestinian partner.

They've actually got to strengthen one if negotiations have any chance of working.

Isn't there another difficulty, which is that the established position of all the Western government's two-state solution, many people think is simply not possible now, because the number of settlements on the West Bank?

Short answers, no.

If I may paraphrase Winston Churchill.

The two-state solution is the worst possible approach to the Palestinian issue, except for all the others.

It's the only way I know to satisfy some Palestinian political aspirations and also for Israel to remain a democratic Jewish state.

Look, I don't underestimate the difficulties.

I've spent a lot of my career failing to succeed here, though there were some, I think, examples of important progress.

And yes, settlements will have to be rolled back in certain areas.

They'll have to be contained.

That'll be part of the challenge.

They were rolled back in Egypt when the Israel made peace with Egypt.

So it's not unprecedented.

I'm not talking wholesale, but in selective areas, in order to create a viable Palestinian state with contiguous territory, there will have to be some movement of Israeli populations.

It's going to be painful.

And the only way you can say it is, can you offset it with the advantages of a lasting peace?

Richard Haas speaking there to Owen Bennett Jones.

Still to come on the Global News Podcast.

Javier Millay, who according to media reports talks to his dead dog, came armed with a chainsaw at a rally in September to convey a message.

Could this be the next president of Argentina?

We look ahead to Sunday's election.

In the days after the 2020 US presidential election, Donald Trump was surrounded by a team who publicly insisted that he had won the vote and was being cheated out of victory.

Nine team people, including Mr. Trump himself, have been charged with attempting to overturn the election result.

On Thursday, one of the former president's lawyers,

Sidney Powell, pleaded guilty to her role.

And let's remind you of the type of things she was claiming back in 2020.

What we are really dealing with here and uncovering more by the day is the massive influence of communist money through Venezuela, Cuba, and likely China in the interference with our elections here in the United States.

Our North America correspondent, Shinga Nyoka, has been following the case.

Well, what happens to Sidney Powell is that she stays out of jail.

She was able to negotiate a plea deal after she pleaded guilty.

And she was sentenced to six years probation a year for each of the convictions

that she was convicted of.

She pleaded guilty to six misdemeanor charges.

And that was a day before her criminal trial was due to begin.

She also was fined \$9,700 US dollars.

But I think more importantly for the former president, Donald Trump,

is that she has agreed to testify not just against him,

but also against anyone else that she is called up to testify against.

But I think she's probably breathing a sigh of relief this evening.

So 17 co-defendants, who are they apart from the former president, Donald Trump?

Well, the other key co-defendant is Donald Trump's former lawyer,

personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani.

Some of the others include other lawyers, campaign managers,

as well as his former chief of staff.

So very senior members of his election campaign in 2020.

And what's been reaction to this in the United States?

There was a lot of surprise, as you heard from the clip there.

She was a really staunch supporter of Donald Trump

and of the fact that he had won these elections.

That's what she said.

Even though I think a lot of these conspiracy theories have been debunked for Donald Trump, he hasn't responded to that.

But I think he will probably be very afraid now.

She was one of the key members of his team, one of his former lawyers.

And now she might testify against him,

in addition to handing over those documents that she has relating to this case.

And what impact do you think that will have on him considering he's running for the presidency?

Well, I think this is one of the key cases against him.

He faces four criminal cases, two federal and two at state level.

And this is one of the ones at the state level.

And if he is found guilty, he will not be able to pardon himself if he becomes president.

And I think according to Georgia law, even if he's found guilty,

he will have to serve a minimum mandatory sentence of a few years before he's eligible for pardon.

And so this is really one of the more serious cases against Donald Trump.

Shinga Nyoka.

Now it reports that the heads of one of China's top property companies

have fled the country, as the company faces losses amounting to billions of dollars.

Country Garden, which failed to make a \$15 million debt repayment due on Tuesday,

has denied the pair have left the country and say they're working as usual.

Our correspondent Morifogarty in Singapore told Gareth Barlow Moore.

The company, Country Garden, put out a statement on its official social media accounts within China,

denying that both the founder and the founder's daughter,

who is the current chairwoman of the company, have fled the country.

They said that both of them are still in China.

They're still working and that the rumor had caused a bad impact.

I'm kind of paraphrasing here a little bit.

So they're denying these reports.

And the reason why they're jittery about it is because don't forget, the founder of the rival company, Evergrande, is now currently under police surveillance after Evergrande declared bankruptcy a couple of years ago.

China's property sector is in crisis.

And China's property sector is vitally important for the wider economy.

Yeah, in the Chinese economy, property market makes up about a third of the entire national economic product, that's the GDP of the economy, right?

So property is huge.

And in China, many people have invested their life savings, not just to buy a home to live in, but for investment purposes.

And they've done it in a period where property prices kept going up and up and up.

And as we all know, that's unsustainable, and that's what exactly has happened.

Now, the government has made it pretty clear that they don't want to encourage any more of this property bubble.

They want to unwind a lot of the debt or the loans that have been in the property sector, and they want to get it back to healthier levels.

It will take a while, and it will cause some pain to some companies and people in the process.

What impact is this crisis having on the wider economy?

So if you think about it, the property sector is not just the construction companies or the developers, it's the people who supply the workers, for example, or the people who do the renovations, or the people who sell the paints or make the glass for the windows.

So there is a knock-on effect onto the wider economy in not just the big companies, but the smaller companies as well.

And don't forget, you know, for the last 20, 30 years, China has been encouraging private enterprise people to set up their own businesses to go about servicing the economy in many ways.

And so the worry here is that that knock-on effect is going to spiral and seep out into the wider economy.

Morphogity.

In Argentina, people go to the polls on Sunday to vote for a new president, who they hope will be able to lead them out of what seems to be a never-ending economic crisis.

The candidates of the traditional left and right are facing a new challenger, a right-wing libertarian economist, Crassie Twig from BBC Monitoring reports now on the race and the appeal of the newcomer, challenging the established political order.

Until the primaries in August, the expectation was that the main presidential contenders would be representatives of each side of LaGrieta, or the left-right rift in Argentinian politics.

But the primaries, considered to be a barometer for the mood of the nation, served up a surprise.

An outsider with unruly hair and radical ideas took the poll position.

Javier Millay, who according to media reports talks to his dead dog, came armed with a chainsaw at a rally in September to convey a message.

He says that he's going to cut down the expenditure of the state by a lot. Camilo Gomez has been watching the race for BBC Monitoring's Latin America team. He shouts the cast trembles. The cast is the term that he uses to refer to the mainstream politicians. Javier Millay is seen as another example of a politician riding the global wave of anti-establishment populism. This is Luis Fajardo, also a Latin America media analyst with BBC Monitoring. It's a worldwide situation where many politicians are promising to make their country great again. In Argentina, this has a particularly strong resonance because Argentina, a century ago, was basically one of the economic powers of the world. It was a very wealthy society, and they have experienced a strong national decline in economic terms. Argentina's economy is at its most fragile in two decades. It's the biggest debtor of the IMF. Inflation is in triple digits. People are getting poorer. There are five candidates volunteering to fix this. The state of the economy presents a challenge for candidates with first-hand experience in governance, like the economy minister Sergio Massa, who's from the current left-wing ruling coalition. The thing with Massa is that he's walking a fine line as a candidate and as a minister. He has received a lot of criticism from the other candidates who say he's economy minister, but the economy is not doing well. Inflation has gone up and he says, I've been minister for one year and I took the job when nobody else wanted to be in charge. Massa's proposals to generate economic growth go hand-in-hand with his social policies. The other main contender, Patricia Bullrich, sometimes called in the media Argentina's iron lady, is seen as a classic conservative candidate. She stands for the status quo. She has defended orthodox positions in managing the economy. She is from a very aristocratic family in Argentina. She moved in very leftist circles. That changed radically as her political career evolved. During the last conservative administration in Argentina, she was seen as a hard-line law-and-order person. She proposes to relax current restrictions on the dollar in Argentina so that the U.S. currency can circulate freely. She has referred to this as by-monitorism. She also says she wants state austerity. The newcomer Javier Milay is offering a radical reset of the economy and the state. He really emphasizes on the unprecedented nature of the things he's proposing. He says he wants to dynamite the central bank of the country to allow free market in an extreme version. He says that he plans to get rid of the Argentine peso and dollarize the economy. That is a way in which he says that he will control inflation. This is a video from Milay's TikTok account, where he tears off labels of various ministries attached to a whiteboard. It's his promise to reduce the size of the state. But despite criticism that his plans would cause more pain for the poorest, he seems to be popular among them while causing alarm in other quarters. Alarm would be an understatement. The more intellectually oriented sections of Argentinean media say they are absolutely horrified with a person like Milay even getting close to the post. Milay would say that this only reflects the disconnect between these people and many Argentinians who clearly find these ideas attractive.

Luis Fajardo ending that report from a crassie twig.

And you can hear more about the Argentine presidential race

in the BBC Monitoring's podcast. Just search the global jigsaw wherever you get your podcasts.

In the Indian state of Gujarat, four police officers have been sentenced to 14 days in prison for contempt of court. It's linked to a case where Muslim men were publicly flogged in October last year. I asked our South Asia editor and Barasen Ethirajan about the background to the case. There was a Hindu festival around this time last year in the state of Gujarat and then the trouble started and both sides accused each other of provoking this violence between Hindus and Muslims. And then the police had intervened and they tried to restore order and during that they arrested a number of people, particularly Muslim men. They were accused of pelting stones at this Hindu festival and they were brought to this village center where they were tied to a pole and the videos emerged showing this around that time and they were publicly beaten with a bamboo stick and the entire village watched. And this triggered widespread anger in India and how police officers who are supposed to follow certain rules can take law into their own hands. Why have they been sent to prison for contempt of court? Because the courts they have given certain guidelines about how those arrested or taken into custody should be treated and there should not be any public display of any violence against anyone and that is why the contempt of court charges were brought against. What it shows is

it is the broader issue of about the treatment of religious minorities in India. It's all about how this trend has increased since the Hindu nationalist BJP government came into power in 2014 with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi coming to power. And Barasan Ethirajan. A man in Spain

is going to prison for repeatedly faking a heart attack to get out of paying for restaurant meals.

The 50 year old man who's originally from Lithuania was arrested 20 times in the last year.

Phoebe Hopson reports. We've all gasped at the bill but faking a heart attack to get out of paying for a meal is perhaps melodramatic. But that's what an unnamed Lithuanian man in Spain did on multiple occasions until his con act wore thin. He became known to the police and they then circulated his photo around the city of Alacante where he liked to dine. He was arrested 20 times but that didn't stop him trying one more time. According to the owner of the last restaurant he entered dressed in smart clothes ordered a sifu paella and two alcoholic drinks. The total bill came to nearly \$40 and to avoid paying he clutched his chest and threw himself on the floor. Despite two hours of acting the restaurant recognized him and alerted the police.

Phoebe Hopson and let's return to our top story. Almost two weeks after the Hamas attack there are signs that Israel's ground offensive in the Gaza Strip is imminent.

But there are growing concerns that the conflict could escalate and spread across the region.

Our international editor Jeremy Bowen has sent us this update. The Americans have said that one of their ships in the Red Sea has shot down a number of cruise missiles or drones that may have been heading for targets in Israel that had been fired out of Yemen. The Houthis who control large parts of the country have an alliance with Iran. Iran has advanced technology for drones and cruise missiles so you can see a connection there. There's been more trouble up on the border with Lebanon in the north. I've seen reports in Israel tonight which I can't personally confirm saying that the Israelis may have killed up to three fighters from Hezbollah who had been trying to fire into Israel and on the West Bank the other part apart from Gaza of the Palestinian occupied

territories. There's been a protracted fight there in a town called Tel Karam in a refugee camp near that between the Israelis and local Palestinians. The Israelis have killed a number of Palestinians with a drone and as far as I know that's still going on the area is sealed off. So you're talking about a lot of tension in a lot of places not big explosions as yet but worries certainly about spread and that has come as well from Ursula van der Leyen of the EU has talked about the worry of the war spreading. The UN is very concerned about it and you can see from the different leaders who've been in the area they're concerned about it too. Trying to keep this thing in one place if they possibly can. Jeremy Bowen on that evolving story.

You'll know by now that we welcome your comments about the stories in this podcast and it was Monday's piece about the anniversary of the lava lamp that prompted Bill from the Netherlands to get in touch. He's an engineering professor and has this message. This is Bill Rosson calling from Delft in the Netherlands. I enjoyed your celebration of the anniversary of the lava lamp. I love lava lamps. Your listeners ought to know though that the wax inside is mixed with hazardous chemicals. Enjoy your lamp but when you dispose of it take it to a hazardous chemicals disposal site. It should not just go with the trash into a landfill. Thanks for the tip Bill and if you want to comment on this podcast or the topics covered in it send us an email. The address is globalpodcast.wbc.co.uk. This edition was mixed by Nick Randall and the producer was Emma Joseph. The editor as ever is Karen Martin. I'm Valerie Sanderson until next time.

Bye bye.