

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Two more hostages released from Gaza

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I'm Nick Kureishi and in the early hours of Tuesday the 24th of October these are our main stories. Two elderly women abducted by Hamas during its attack on Israel this month have been released.

An Israeli government minister has warned the militant group the decision won't stop his country's forces moving into Gaza. In other news, climate scientists have warned that even if carbon emissions are cut, the giant West Antarctic ice sheet will melt raising sea levels.

Also in this podcast, Bobby is an easygoing, very laid back, very happy dog that has had this abundant life living outside, eating fresh food in a very low stress happy environment.

That was then Bobby the world's oldest dog has died at the age of 31.

Hamas militants in Gaza have released two elderly female hostages seized during the group's deadly rampage through southern Israel earlier this month. It says the move follows mediation efforts by Qatar and Egypt. The women freed have been named in Israel as Nurit Cooper and Yorkeved Lifshitz both in their 80s. The Hamas video shows them being handed over to representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross. Our diplomatic correspondent Paul Adams, who's in Jerusalem, has been looking at the footage of their release.

And what footage it is too. First of all we've seen them in ambulances and pictures broadcast on Egyptian television. They were delivered across the border into Egypt and then I think immediately driven a short distance to the Israeli border. But then Hamas released a video just as they did a few days ago when they released the first two hostages. And in that video you see the moment the two elderly ladies were actually handed over by masked Hamas gunman to the ICRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross. And just at that moment Yorkeved turns to the masked gunman, shakes his hand and says shalom before getting in the ambulance. I mean it's a kind of remarkable scene. Clearly this is a highly delicate and highly charged process and it may well be that at some point the Qataris felt that they were going to be able to deliver a much bigger group of hostages. More than 50 we thought until early this evening. That all seemed to go away and officials in Qatar said no no no we're just talking about two. And interestingly the two in question are two who were mentioned two days ago by Hamas who said they wanted to deliver them

to Israel but that Israel was not interested in receiving them. That was a report the Israelis at the time described as mendacious. So I think you get a little glimpse into the kind of tussle, the battle of wills. And I think this is a pretty unbearable situation for the Netanyahu government to be in because it wants to get on with its military business in Gaza and that's going to involve at some point a ground invasion. But as long as this groundswell of popular opinion and international opinion amounts it's very difficult for the government to know quite how to proceed. And clearly Hamas is playing on that. Paul Adams in Jerusalem, the International Committee

of the Red Cross said it had facilitated the release by transporting the women out of Gaza on Monday evening. Lewis Vaughan Jones spoke to Stephen Ryan from the ICRC in Jerusalem. What I can say right now is that the International Committee of the Red Cross is relieved that two more people are able to return to their families. This underscores the

neutral intermediary role that the International Committee of the Red Cross can play in arms conflicts. And certainly while we're delighted that two more people are safely home, we continue to call for the release of the remaining hostages and to continue to call for access to be able to visit them. And can you tell us anything about the process, about what goes on? How does this actually physically happen? Well the ICRC's role is to act in this case as an intermediary between the parties. We are not involved in selecting who is released or when. What our role was tonight was to make sure that these two people were safely transported to a location where they could be returned to their homes. The process that we follow is done in a way which is quite sensitive as is the dialogue that we have with the parties. Our goal is to not seek publicity but to respond to questions that people have about why the ICRC has such a quiet diplomatic role. It's certainly also to make sure that we remain focused on the safe return of people to their families because the ICRC's role is to focus on helping people who are affected by armed conflict wherever they are and whoever they are. And just give us an idea of how challenging your role is. I'm talking about physically airstrikes, the conditions there of trying to get people out safely. Well certainly this is something which involves a large number of colleagues both here in Israel and the occupied territories and around the world. Or challenges are numerous and certainly your teams, luckily we have a large number of staff based in Gaza from before the escalation of this conflict over 100 staff. While they're responding to the humanitarian needs on the ground of people affected by fighting, they're also working wherever possible to facilitate such release operations. And this is an extremely challenging environment to work in. But the International Committee of the Red Cross has a long experience working both in difficult environments as well as facilitating the dialogue between different parties on the issues related to hostages. Steven Ryan from the ICRC in Jerusalem, the Israeli government had said 222 people, most of them civilians, were currently being held hostage in Gaza. Meanwhile the stories continue to emerge of the circumstances in which many of the Israeli hostages were taken on the 7th of October following the attacks by Hamas. Those attacks left 1400 Israelis dead. Hamas is designated a terror organisation by many western governments including the UK. Our correspondent Aleph Foster has spoken to another Israeli family who are desperate for news about their missing relative. Her report does contain some distressing details including audio of the assault on the family's home which they were forced to live stream by the Hamas attackers. Gali Adan has two priorities now. The first is to protect her surviving children in this peaceful kibbutz that's welcomed them in since their home was destroyed. The second is to get her husband Sachi back. On October the 7th the family woke to the sound of rocket alert sirens. Hamas gunmen stormed into their home in the kibbutz of Nahal Oz and began firing. Their eldest daughter Mayan was shot dead as she tried to help her father keep the men out of the family's safe room. She turned 18 just four days earlier. Sachi is broken. Sachi is broken. He saw his daughter die. He saw her getting shot in her head and die. Next to him is daughter that had just celebrated turning 18. The house is full of balloons and congratulations and blood. Sachi was driven away to Gaza with his daughter's blood still covering his hands. More than two weeks later the Adan family don't know where or how he is.

Yesterday they buried Mayan without her father at the funeral and their message is a clear one. As negotiations for the release of the more than 220 hostages continue and the potential of a ground invasion of Gaza remains they want their husband and father return to them in Israel safe and alive. A report by Ana Foster. Hundreds more people have been killed in the Gaza Strip during the latest stage of the intensified Israeli bombardment of the besieged territory. The Hamas run health ministry there said over 430 people had died in 24 hours. It says more than 5,000 people have been killed since Israel began its bombing operation. Rear Admiral Daniel Higari from the Israel Defense Forces said Israel has carried out limited incursions inside the Gaza Strip ahead of a possible ground offensive. There is a sortie which is attacking dozens of points where we understand the terrorists are assembling. The terrorists are getting organized in anticipation of the next stages of the war and our role is to reduce these threats. Therefore we are exploiting all of the time available to us to improve our readiness and our ability to carry out the ground maneuver in the best possible way. Israel had told Palestinians to go to southern Gaza for their own safety ahead of the possible ground offensive. A woman who moved to Khan Yunus in the south told the BBC she'd lost 13 members of her immediate family. The third humanitarian convoy in as many days has reached the Gaza Strip from Egypt via the Rafa crossing. The Palestinian Red Crescent said the 20 trucks were loaded with food, water and medical supplies. Earlier the head of the main UN agency helping Palestinians in Gaza and Roir said hundreds of truckloads of aid were needed every day rather than the few which had been allowed in so far. Soraya Ali from Save the Children told the BBC her charity was waiting to enter Gaza. Our correspondent Rushdie Abu Alouf lives and works in Gaza and has been reporting on the situation there since the Hamas attacks in Israel on October the 7th. He filed this report on the worsening humanitarian situation live for BBC television news on Monday night from a hospital courtyard in Khan Yunus in southern Gaza as missiles were heard flying above him. People have been saying the trucks coming in from the Egyptian side but they are not getting any aid. I think there is still some sort of negotiation going on with Israel in which ground and who is going to handle the little fuel that came from an old tank near the border and also about 40 or 45 trucks carrying medicine, food, water. It's been intense airstrikes tonight as well. This is the third or fourth one just close to the hospital. So another night of heavy bombing in southern Gaza, Khan Yunus. This is the area where Israel asked 1.2 million people to come in. They said it's safer for you to be south. But as you can see every night there is airstrikes here in this area. But in Gaza City, I think tonight Hamas local authority said that Israel is committing massacres. As they said, they destroyed three houses over the heads of their people. More than 20 people killed and dozens other injured. When we talk about a humanitarian situation, things are getting worse and worse here. As the people are watching the trucks coming in but there is no aid being distributed. Very little aid goes to the shelters, the UN shelters. They are talking about 130 shelters for the more than half million people who are staying, who are displaced from their houses in Gaza City and the north. And they came south. They are now staying in the UN schools, UN shelters and hospitals here in this hospital courtyard. Hundreds of families are taking this hospital as refugees with very little food and very little water. They are almost survived, as they told me. We have seen kids speaking from journalists, speaking from medical teams and begging in the street for water or food. This is a catastrophic situation, as the UN described it. And the local authority here is trying to manage what is available. They have

very little resources. The hospital is overwhelmed by the number of injuries and they are struggling to cope with the situation. Rushji Abu al-Aloof in southern Gaza and he did manage to end his report safely. Well, the UN says more than 19,000 people have been displaced in southern Lebanon amid a surge in tensions along the border with Israel. The Iranian-backed militia group Hezbollah has mounted repeated missile and rocket attacks on Israel, which has fired back at the group's launch sites. Hugo Bachego is in Lebanon. This morning we visited some villages along the border and people have left. One village was completely deserted because people are concerned. Many of them still remember the devastation brought by the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah.

And all eyes here in this country are on Hezbollah, which is this powerful military, social, political movement that is supported by Iran. It is considered a terrorist organization by the UK, by the US and other countries. Hugo Bachego. Now on to other news. A new research suggests that cutting greenhouse gases may no longer be enough to stop the West Antarctic ice sheet collapsing into the sea. An article in the journal Nature Climate Change says the process is likely to take hundreds of years, but could raise sea levels by up to five meters. The researchers say this is enough to flood many coastal cities around the world. Our climate editor, Justin Rolex, told me more about the findings. The West Antarctic ice sheet is particularly vulnerable. I mean, some people say it's the most vulnerable large bit of ice in the world, and that's because it rests on bedrock below sea level. And that means that the water washes right up to the front of the ice. And in theory, the water warms up, it can eat into the ice and undermine it, melt it from beneath. And so it really is vulnerable to even the smallest changes in water temperature. And what this new paper says is that even under the strongest climate action, the deepest carbon cuts, the water around the West Antarctic is likely to warm three times as fast as it did in the last century. And that means it will begin to melt away the ice shelves. Those are the kind of buttresses that kind of hold the ice sheets in place. If those melt away, the ice behind the ice sheet moves, flows down into the water and then is exposed to the water and can melt away. And of course, as well as losing the ice sheets, that has enormous consequences in terms of sea level rise. Here's Caitlin Norton of the British Antarctic Survey. She's one of the authors of this new paper. We found that no matter what we do with fossil fuel emissions, we can expect ocean warming and ice shelf melting in this region to speed up by about a factor of three over the next century. So it seems like we are already committed to some pretty rapid changes in the future. Why is it important to protect ice in the Antarctic?

Well, it's important to protect ice, as you heard there, to stop the sea level rising. Potentially there's, you know, in the West Antarctic alone, up to five meters of sea level rise. Even a small rise in sea level would affect millions of people because so many of our cities are located on the coast or on rivers, which are essentially a pretty near sea level. So lots of cities could be flooded. So it does sound rather pessimistic, this, isn't it?

Well, I think it is pessimistic. I mean, what they're saying is that even if we accelerate our carbon cuts, it's not going to have a huge effect on the melting of this vast body of ice. But if you talk to the scientists, they say, listen, this is not an excuse to give up. They say, look at the other side, look to the east, to eastern Antarctica, which has far more ice on it, 10 times as much, 50 meters of sea level rise in the east Antarctic. Now, because that sits on the land, the big determinant of how quickly it melts is air temperatures. And across Antarctica, we're expecting air temperatures to remain below zero for, you know, hundreds, if not thousands

of years. So, so long as we can moderate climate change and keep the air temperature across Antarctica

below zero, that would be a huge gift, if you like, to our descendants who are going to have to live with the consequences of the decisions that we make about this kind of thing in the future.

Just in rollout.

Still to come. There's so much inequality of wealth. Wealth inequality is about twice that of income inequality. Could billionaires have to pay a minimum rate of tax?

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Welcome back to the Global News Podcast. Nigeria has won an \$11 billion case in a British court over a failed gas deal. The judge found that a company based in the British Virgin Islands, P and ID, had paid bribes to an Nigerian oil ministry official. Mione Jones has more details.

In 2017, Africa's largest economy was ordered to pay \$11 billion to P and ID, around a third of its foreign exchange reserves. But Nigeria's lawyers appealed, arguing that P and ID had paid bribes to obtain the contract and corrupted the country's lawyers to obtain confidential documents during the arbitration. P and ID denied Nigeria's allegations, blaming the failure of the gas deal on institutional incompetence.

Mione Jones. Still with Nigeria, eight months after President Bola Tinibu was officially elected, his political opponents have gone to the Supreme Court, claiming the vote was rigged. Their legal challenge was rejected last month, but now as part of their appeal, they have presented new claims that Mr Tinibu forged his diploma from an American university. The president denies any wrongdoing. Our reporter, Chris Walker, is in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, and told me more about the allegations. His opponents, Attiku Abu Bakar, who was a former president of Nigeria, and Peter Ubi, said that there was intimidation, there was overvoting, there was vote buying, and rigging, which were rejected by the petition tribunal.

Despite that, Attiku Abu Bakar has now presented a new evidence. He says that President Tinibu submitted a certificate to the electoral authorities, which is at variance with what was purportedly issued to him by the Chicago State University, where he claimed he attended, and that the Supreme Court should now look at the new evidence, as well as the other body of evidence that had been presented, and declare that President Tinibu was not qualified to run for president. So these men think they've got strong grounds to challenge this. Any realistic chance they will succeed? Well, that is a very big question. In Nigeria, since 1999, when the country returned to civil rule or moved away from military rule, we have often seen that oppositions or those who didn't win the election have often gone to court to challenge the outcome of the election. But in all the challenges, either the Appellate Court, which serve as the petition tribunal, or the Supreme Court have always upheld the winner of the election.

How is President Tinibu and his party reacting to this challenge?

Expertly, President Tinibu and his party actually in court today at the Supreme Court, when the hearing started, President Tinibu's legal team said that the Supreme Court should discountenance the challenges and strike out the appeal because they lack merit.

But what I can also say is that these challenges have polarized opinions in Nigeria, especially on social media. You see clashes between the supporters of each of these politicians, and everybody now appear to be looking to what the decision of the Supreme Court would be.

We're expecting that the decision will be reached in a matter of weeks time.

Chris Walker in Abuja, next to Pakistan, where the Supreme Court has ruled that military trials of civilians are unconstitutional. The judges said all such trials of those held in connection with the violence in the aftermath of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's arrest in a corruption case in May should be null and void. And Brasen Etirajan reports.

More than a hundred people were facing charges of attacks on military compounds during the unrest that followed the detention of Imran Khan.

The violence saw unprecedented attacks on Pakistani military compounds.

The authorities called it a rebellion against the state and said they would use military courts to try the suspects. Rights groups criticized the move, saying such trials violated an individual's right to due process. On Monday, the Supreme Court ordered that transfer of all the cases from military courts to civilian ones. A senior lawyer said Monday's judgment would strengthen Pakistan's constitution and democracy.

Tourism, trade and culture in the Icelandic government is also taking part in the strike.

We celebrate this day because this is a day that women's rights are celebrated worldwide.

And in 1975 was the first strike, or it was called then the day off, where about 90 percent, 9-0 of all women, they decided to stop working in order to emphasize the importance that they have in the labour force. And it's unpaid work as well. So if women in Iceland are doing more of the cleaning at home, it's going to be a little bit grubbier. I wonder whether the men will just leave it for Wednesday and then say, can you clean up for the day you weren't working on Tuesday, maybe? Well, I think that one of the things and one of the aims of these actions is also the awareness of the different positions that men, women often have at the household.

So just also just a discussion and will improve, I think, matters in many places.

Indeed. It's drawing attention to it, isn't it really? So there's a conversation that people have.

For instance, I have a daughter who is 14 years old. I mean, she will not tend any classes where women are teaching her. And they all think then more about it. It's the same thing. I have a son who's 16 years old. And I mean, you wouldn't have this discussion unless these actions were taken. And I can also tell you that the wage gap in Iceland is probably one of the smallest.

Billiard Dogg, Alfred Stottir there, who's the Minister for Tourism, Trade and Culture in the Icelandic government. Well, staying with matters financial are billionaires paying too little tax. And just how do we solve that problem? Well, a new report from the European Union Tax Observatory says they should face a minimum tax rate. Joseph Stiglitz wrote the introduction to the report. He's a former chief economist at the World Bank and a Nobel Prize winner for his work on economics. Rahul Tandon asked him what the main proposal was in this report.

The proposal that's been put forward is a global wealth tax, a tax on their wealth.

And a tax at a very low rate would actually generate huge amounts of money. And the reason that it generates so much money is that there's so much inequality of wealth. Wealth inequality is about twice that of income inequality. What we're talking about, isn't it, is a 2% wealth levy that could help raise \$250 billion a year. That sounds great in principle, and we've sort of had something similar, haven't we? There's been put on multinationals in terms of a 15% minimum tax rate. But how possible is it really to implement this? It's a great idea, but it's not really practical, is it? It could be done. There's a lot of discussion since the 2008 financial crisis

of doing something about the tax havens where so much money is hidden. And we put a lot of pressure on these tax havens. There is more transparency. My own view is that these tax havens exist because the wealthy in the wealthy countries wanted to exist. And if US and the EU together said, we're not going to allow these safe havens, these secrecy havens, to continue doing what they're doing, I think it would be easy for us to implement a tax like that. Okay, but let's look at President Biden. He wanted to propose something similar, didn't he? A levy basically on unrealized capital gains of those who are earning huge amounts of money. And he wasn't able to get it through. That shows you the scale of the problem in trying to put this in place. It's obvious that those who are avoiding paying their fair share of taxes will do everything they can and use every bogus argument to make sure it doesn't happen. But there are small percentage of the population and we desperately need these tax revenues for a whole variety of things, not the least of which is to fight climate change. So I'm hopeful that democracy will prevail. I don't think it's going to be easy. It's going to be a fight. And that's why the report of the observatory detailing the magnitude of this tax avoidance is so important. Joseph Stiglitz, a former chief economist at the World Bank, and a Nobel Prize winner for his work on economics. One of India's all-time greatest cricketers, Bishan Singh Bedi, has died at the age of 77. The left-arm spinner capped in his country and took 266 test wickets between 1966 and 1979. That must be close. It reads just four short of his 100 and a lovely piece of bowling there from Bedi that really was good bowling. Well that's out. We'll get the Bedi a little bit of bouncer, surprisingly. All Bedi, Fletcher goes, a very simple catch around the corner to Solcar and he's unlikely to miss anything like that. A skipper, Bedi once declared India's second innings at 97 for five against the West Indies in Jamaica. In protest at what he considered intimidatory bowling, he also forfeited a game against Pakistan, alleging the umpires were biased. After retiring, Bishan Bedi continued to be known for his outspoken views on the game, criticising players and officials. The great Indian batsman, Sachin Tendulkar, paid tribute to his former coach, saying the world seems an empty place without you. The world's oldest dog has died at the age of 31. Bobby, a Guinness world record holder, passed away at his home in Portugal at the weekend. He was a crossbreed mountain sheep dog and his lifestyle and diets will be studied by dog lovers everywhere, keen to give their pets the longest life possible. Paul Henley heard more from Karen Becker, an American vet and author who went to visit Bobby as part of the research for her latest book. Bobby is an easygoing, very laid back, very happy dog that has had this abundant life living outside, eating fresh food in a very low stress, happy environment. In the village he was born, in fact, in the house that he was born at. He was a big dog, wasn't he? And we're always told it's the smaller breeds that live the longest. You know, he is a Raphael, the Portuguese term for mixed breed or a mutt. And Bobby was not a purebred dog, despite a lot of people reporting him as such. Lionel's father was a hunter and collected many mixed breed dogs over the years, and Bobby was a mixed breed dog that was actually born in a shed behind their home. And he was a larger dog for being as old as he was. He was a 55 pound dog and he was actually a little overweight in the second part of his life, which is also an interesting fact that typically doesn't correlate with extra longevity. But in Bobby's situation, I really think it was his lifestyle as well as probably a good set of excellent DNA that contributed to his exceptionally

long live life. And we hear that he ate Mediterranean food from the garden. There must have been some meat involved, though, was there? Yes, there certainly was. So Lionel and his family grow much of the food that they eat. They have a massive garden. Bobby is free to roam. He'd never been on a leash in his whole life. He's free to roam. He nibbled from the garden every day. But he also never consumed any ultra processed dog food. So he never had dry food or kibble or canned food. His family prepared his meals every day, fresh from the garden, as well as raising rabbits and chickens and also fish. Every day, Bobby would eat a piece of fish that his family prepared for him. So he did eat a lot of meat and then freshly prepared vegetables as well. And just like an ingredient in human longevity, love seems to have been involved, being popular. It's so true. In fact, when I asked Lionel what he thought were the most powerful contributors to Bobby's exceptionally long life, he said, good food, contact with nature, freedom to move around his environment, really good vet care and love. He said, I believe that Bobby knows that he's deeply loved. And I would say after seeing Bobby's interaction with his entire family, Bobby absolutely knew that he was very well loved. Did Bobby have puppies? They must be much in demand. You know, Bobby was intact. He was not neutered. But to Lionel's knowledge, he has not sired any litters. But right now we are testing his DNA. When I was there, I did some DNA samples for Eniko Kubinili, which is the head researcher for the Family Dog Project out of Hungary. And she was actually the researcher that identified the DNA of exceptionally long-lived dogs that she called Methuselah dogs. So we have taken swabs and right now those samples are being processed to determine if indeed Bobby carried the DNA that powerfully contributed to his extra long life. We don't know the answer yet, but we're all pretty suspicious and confident that he probably has got some pretty good genetic material going on. Vet and author Karen Becker on the life of Bobby, the world's oldest dog who's died at the age of 31, almost 31 and a half, in fact. 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 at bbc.co.uk. You can also find us on X, formerly known as Twitter, at Global News Pod. This edition was mixed by Caroline Driscoll. The producer was Liam McCheffrey, the editor, Karen Martin. I'm Nick Kersey and until next time, goodbye.