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I'm Valerie Sanderson, and in the early hours of Saturday, the 23rd of September, these are our main stories. Ukraine strikes the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea. In the US, leading Democrat Senator Bob Menendez is charged with corruption.

Also in this podcast,

More abductions of students in northern Nigeria, and how lawyers in the US are using documentary style videos to persuade judges their clients deserve leniency.

We start with the latest development in the war in Ukraine, a missile attack on the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in the Crimean port of Sevastopol.

Video images of the aftermath captured police sirens and plumes of smoke coming from the main building. Russian officials said one serviceman was missing. The Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed from Ukraine back in 2014, has been a frequent target since the start of the war almost 19 months ago when Russia invaded. Vitaly Shevchenko is BBC Monitoring's Russia editor.

This is obviously the most significant such attack on Sevastopol so far during this full-scale invasion. It's almost certain that Ukraine's behind it, even though we've not had a completely official statement confirming this. The closest we have to it is a telegram post by the head of Ukrainian Air Force who said, we told you there's going to be more and he thanked Ukrainian pilots for what's happening today. And of course his remarks come after Ukraine earlier this month was able to target Russian Navy vessels in a dry dock in Crimea and also two Russian air defense systems. So it seems obvious that Ukraine's capability to target Crimea has increased dramatically. And does that suggest they've had an input from the West regarding missiles?

Well, it's possible that Western supplied missiles such as Britain's Storm Shadow or the Scalp missile could have been fired from Ukrainian fighter jets, but it's also possible that Ukrainian missiles such as the Neptune developed recently was used in this attack as well.

So how significant is it for both Kiev and indeed Moscow?

Well, it's hugely significant because in practical terms, even though we don't know what the impact

of this strike is going to be on Russia's operations in the Black Sea, Ukraine would be hoping to undermine Russia's ability to fire missiles at Ukraine from ships in the Black Sea. Also, Russia has been threatening to use its Navy ships to block maritime routes which Ukraine has been using to export grain. And thirdly, there were fears, especially in the first few weeks of this invasion, that Russia could use Black Sea Fleet ships to mount a land assault on Ukraine's Southern Odessa and Mikhailov regions. But symbolically, the Black Sea Fleet is basically at the heart of Russia's military presence in the region. It's a source of huge pride for Russians.

And it's something that the Kremlin has used the presence of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea to justify its claim to the annexed Ukrainian peninsula. And of course, President Putin has also said that Russia had to take control of Crimea to stop the Black Sea Fleet from falling into Western hands. And when he said that shortly after the annexation in 2014, there was no realistic threat facing the Black Sea Fleet. And now the symbol of Russia's military presence in Crimea has suffered a pretty humiliating attack. Vitaly Shevchenko.

Julian Marshall got this reaction to the attack on the naval headquarters in Sevastopol from a Russian MP, Yevgeny Popov, from President Putin's United Russia Party.

It's war, and we understand it. And you should understand that Ukraine is losing this war on the battlefield politically and in all other aspects. And of course, it's a challenge for Crimea. It's a challenge for Russian people. It's a challenge for Russian Black Sea Fleet.

But we will solve this problem sooner or later. And of course, all terrorists who are behind this attack will get responsibilities. And I don't know exactly how we're going to respond, but you will see. Earlier this year, I think it was in June, your Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said that if Western-supplied missiles were used against targets in Crimea, it would mark the West's full involvement in the conflict and would entail immediate strikes upon decision-making centres in Ukrainian territory. Have we reached that point?

I don't know. I'm not a military guy, but I'm a politician and journalist. And my Minister of Defence was pretty clear. And of course, it will be some response to important targets in Ukraine. But this attack can't change the situation on the battlefield.

In the United States, a high-profile Democrat senator has been charged over a bribery and corruption scandal. Prosecutors have accused New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez and his wife of helping three Egyptian businessmen in exchange for bribes. At a news conference, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Damien Williams, gave more details about the FBI's investigation.

They discovered approximately \$500,000 of cash stuffed into envelopes and closets. Some of the cash was stuffed in the senator's jacket pockets. Some of the envelopes of cash contained Davies' fingerprints or Davies' DNA. That's not all. Agents also discovered a lot of gold, gold that was provided by Davies and Hannah. And the FBI, of course, found the Mercedes-Benz that your rebate had provided them.

Following the indictment, Senator Menendez has temporarily stepped down from his position as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. We find out more about the charges he faces from our North America correspondent, Netotovic.

We know that the three of them were able to allegedly get Menendez to pull his weight for them in the government, one of them with the Department of Agriculture to help him protect a business monopoly he had that was granted to him by the Egyptian government. And the other two, apparently they were facing two different prosecutions by the Department of

Justice. And so Menendez tried to pressure officials there to be lenient on them. He tried to even install a prosecutor who could stop those prosecutions going forward. This is all allegedly, of course, Menendez himself has said that these are baseless allegations. But these three businessmen are now going to be obviously a key part of this case going forward. They also say, though, that Menendez gave the Egyptian government sensitive information and tried to kind of help them lift a hold on \$300 million in aid in the country by ghostwriting a letter to other senators. And as a Democratic senator, how damaging could this case be for his party, do you think, and indeed for President Joe Biden? I think it's incredibly important to remember that Senator Menendez has held on to his seat since 2006, but he is facing election this year. And this is the second bribery trial that he is having to face. The last one ended up with a deadlock jury. So he was ultimately acquitted. But this is at a time when a lot of people are showing discontent with the amount of influence and power senators have by staying in power for so long. There's a big debate here in the United States about term limits. So the Democrats have a very narrow majority in the Senate at the moment, along with the independents who vote with them. They're at 51 seats to 49 Republican members in the Senate. Netotopic. The public prosecutor's office in Paris has recommended that the French far-right leader Marine Le Pen should face trial over the alleged misuse of European Union funds. The call for criminal charges follows a seven-year investigation, as Paddy McGuire reports. Marine Le Pen is not alone. The prosecutor also accuses more than 20 other members of her National Rally Party of similar systematic breaches of EU rules. That between 2004 and 2016 they used money allocated to EU parliamentary assistance to instead pay staff working for their own party, known at the time as the National Front. The National Rally Party and Ms Le Pen have denied any wrongdoing. Judges will decide whether to take the case forward. If they do, she could face a 10-year jail sentence and a \$1 million fine. Paddy McGuire. Lawyers in the US are using short documentary-style videos about their clients' lives to try and persuade judges, juries and prosecutors to look beyond the charges and see the accused as people deserving of redemption and even leniency. Tom Brooke now reports from New York where lawyers are claiming these so-called mitigation videos lead to reduced sentences. As passengers take off from New York's LaGuardia Airport, often en route to exotic locations, they will within less than a minute fly over a very different destination, Rikers Island, the city's largest jail. It has the reputation of being the most dangerous place to be incarcerated in America. It was from Rikers Island that Augusta Gussie Clay, suffering from cystic fibrosis and cancer, spoke by phone to his lawyers amid growing concern of COVID infection. People waking up to what they can't breathe, they need to go to the hospital, they never return. I am afraid of dying and prison from a disease that I don't know none about. Excerpts from Clay's phone call were used in what's called a mitigation video, a collection of interviews and images put together by his legal team to help persuade a judge to release him early. He was serving a 12-month sentence violating his parole after pleading guilty to attempted robbery in the third degree, a low-level felony. All right, ruling. And first, could you give me one loud clap? Veteran New York filmmaker David Simpson makes these mitigation videos.

A mitigation video encapsulates the life and history of a client to show an individual as a full human being with the hopes that we're building empathy. So in Clay's mitigation video, there were photos of him caring for loved ones and testimony from his longtime partner, Tanisha Burke, presenting him in the best possible light. I love him, always so sweet, generous, kind to the family, the first to give and the last to receive, always. I began to see these mitigation videos being used for wealthier clients in federal court. Nicole Mull leads the video mitigation project at the Legal Aid Society, America's oldest and largest law firm for low-income individuals. It represented Gussie Clay. I always felt that if the judge were to hear from our clients, they would learn a lot about them, who they are, the humans that they are, what drives them and what we should be doing as society rather than incarcerate them. Some mitigation videos use music and play on sentiment to try to influence a judge. Although she champions the use of mitigation videos, Regina Austin, director of the Penn program on documentaries and the law, warns they shouldn't aim to manipulate with music. A bad mitigation video attempts to pull at the heartstrings. I want videos to be used to enlighten. We have in our minds eye notions of what criminals look like. Mitigation videos can try and change that image in the mind by providing context. But in a country where there's an intense debate over whether inmates should be punished or rehabilitated, there are critics opposed to mitigation videos. Jennifer Harrison is executive director of the Victims' Rights Reform Council. It's absolutely infuriating and it's just another slap in the face to victims because once again, all empathy and emphasis is placed on the criminal. I don't necessarily have a problem with the videos in itself. There are some mitigating issues in certain cases, but if they're going to be allowed to use these videos for the criminals, then victims should have that same luxury. But Legal Aid points out that victims in New York can deliver impact statements at sentencing. They submitted Gussie Clay's video to an attorney general and a judge, along with documents containing legal arguments for review. Clay was released two months early. Within a year, though, he died from his chronic diseases. Although there's no absolute proof, his legal team believe it was the mitigation video that got him out of Rikers Island. There are no hard figures on how common mitigation videos are. But in a country that has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world, they are increasingly being seen by lawyers as an effective tool that can often reduce jail sentences.

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I had just come out of one of my bare knuckle boxing matches. I don't know why, but the first thing that came to my brain was, what if I do a drag show? Remarkable personal stories told by the people that lived them. I could easily have pulled that trigger, but that was not my brief. I was not an assassin. I was not told to do that. I was not told to murder him.

Lives less ordinary from the BBC World Service. Find it wherever you get your BBC podcasts. Over the last few years, Nigeria has faced an outbreak of kidnappings, as roving gangs seized people from villages, highways and farms, and demanded ransom payments from their relatives. The kidnapping of students was used by Islamist

militants to intimidate the population, but it's now become a money-spinning industry for armed gangs.

In the latest case, gunmen have abducted a number of female university students from Northwestern Zamfara State. This girl managed to avoid capture.

We were sleeping around the truth. Everywhere was dark, and they were just shooting about like 10 minutes, and we did not move, we did not do anything. So when they saw it like that, they moved to the other house. They came in, they broke the windows, and they came in most of them.

Azizat Ola Oluwa from the BBC's House of Service in Abuja, tell me more.

Local media is saying that 24 female students were abducted and 10 to 11 other university staff as well. All we know at this time is that about six of those that were abducted have been rescued by joint military efforts of the Nigerian military police and some local vigilantes,

and rescue operation is still ongoing, and the government is expected to or has been asked by a number of activists and also Amnesty International to do everything to ensure the speedy rescue of those that have been taken away, because the longer this continues and the longer the rescue operation continues, rather, the more difficult it's going to be to get these students and the other people abducted will be. And what do we know about the kidnappers?

Have we heard anything from them? There is no official statement from any group so far, but we know that banditry is a huge problem in northwestern Nigeria, and especially in Zanfer estates. So maybe it's because the rescue operation is still ongoing, so pretty much security officials are still on the tail of these abductors, so maybe they've not been able to settle down in one place and they'll be able to, you know, make a statement or something.

As you said, it's not the first time this has happened in Zanfer estates. Why is it such a problem there? Interesting that not just Zanfer, now the entire northwestern Nigeria is known to be saturated

with stories of banditry almost every day, but particularly in Zanfer, and that's due to what people could say, maybe the continuous conflict between farmers and pastoralists, and then the porous border is playing a huge role in all of this, because the former minister of information I recall said that because of the porous border in the northern part of Nigeria, that has encouraged a lot of arms, illegal arms coming into that region of the country, and then, you know, fearing illegal activities like this banditry, and of course Zanfer again is known to be a place where illegal mining is going on. So, and you know when there is illegal mining, it means that there may be armed criminal gangs there trying to maybe, you know, steal the precious stones that miners are taking and all of this. So there is a mixed bag of factors that is making banditry to be a problem, not just in Zanfer estates, but in northwestern Nigeria. Azizat Ola Oluwa.

Pope Francis is making the first papal visit to the French city of Marseille in five centuries.

At the beginning of a two-day visit to the Mediterranean port, he said it was a duty of humanity to rescue migrants attempting the sea crossing from North Africa into Europe.

Too many people fleeing from conflict, poverty and environmental disasters find in the waves of

the Mediterranean the definitive rejection of their search for a better future. And so this splendid sea has become an enormous cemetery where many brothers and sisters are deprived even of

the right to have a tomb. So how are these strong words from Pope Francis likely to be received?

Chris Bochman is a journalist based in the south of France. They have been well received in Marseille,

but they won't be well received by everyone, that's for sure. As you know, around 12,000 migrants turned up on the island of Lampedusa in just off Italy in the last few weeks.

The French government made it clear that none of them, absolutely none of them, will be welcomed in France. As you also know, around 45% of the French electorate voted for the far right of the last presidential election. So it's a very divisive issue of migration.

Marseille, of course, he hasn't chosen it by coincidence. It's a city that's built on migration. So what he said will go down well there, but not necessarily with the rest of the country. And what else is he doing on this trip? Indeed, he's holding a mass at the Velodrome, which people who know football knows the amazing stadium there, which can hold up to about 45,000

people. And it will be packed. And he's also meeting President Macron in a private talk where clearly migration will be raised by both of them. He made it clear that he wasn't coming to France.

This is Pope Francis. He said he was coming to Marseille because he said that this is about linking the North Bank and the South Bank of the Mediterranean, as they called it.

And he said that basically love his people who are priests in North Africa are telling him that the migrants who are trying to get across the across the Mediterranean are being held in atrocious conditions. And it's up to countries like France to do something about it so that they're not kept in those atrocious conditions.

So there will be frank talks between the French president and Pope Francis.

Chris Bachman. Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwal Ahakaka has urged donors to release billions of dollars in pledges to help it recover from last year's catastrophic floods, thought to be one of the world's costliest natural disasters. Over 1,700 people died, and 8 million were displaced. More from Eletrina Smith.

From June to October last year, Pakistan suffered its worst ever floods. Driven said scientists by climate change. Donors, including the World Bank, promised some \$10 billion to help.

But the country's caretaker Prime Minister says it hasn't materialized.

The money is crucial for cash drive Pakistan. A much needed IMF bailout has been delayed due to concerns over a lack of fiscal reform. Government instability hasn't helped either, a possible reason for the cash not turning up. Anwal Ahakaka, who's in New York for the UN General Assembly, says his government is trying to ensure the money is dispersed to Pakistan and spent on those directly affected.

Eletrina Smith

YouTubers now rank as some of the most famous and influential people in the world, often better known than some Hollywood stars. And they're making a lot of money.

They added more than \$3.5 billion to the UK's economy last year.

Daniel Middleton, known online as DanTDM, is one of Britain's most successful YouTubers, famous for his video game commentaries. The 31-year-old has posted thousands of videos across three separate YouTube channels, reaching more than 34 million subscribers

and clocking up more than 21 billion views. The BBC's culture editor, Katie Razzle, has been talking to him.

Hey guys, Daniel, welcome back. I've been playing video games ever since I was young. The views were just ridiculous.

We are going to be doing the Diamond Minecart experiment.

We hit the most viewed channel on the entire site. I still look back, I'm just like, that's crazy. Get in there.

At one point, DanTDM was the most watched YouTuber in the world. For more than a decade, he's made videos about gaming from his house that turned a boy from Aldershot into one of Britain's most successful and richest YouTubers.

Welcome back to Minecraft and Legends.

Dan Middleton, his real name, turned his love of Minecraft into a cultural brand, with a reported net worth greater than many footballers. He's released books and lent his voice to Disney movies.

I'm your friendly eBay alert messenger.

At one stage, his channel was getting 400 million hits every month.

I was really shy at school. Like, you wouldn't catch me doing anything like this.

A lot of YouTubers are naturally introverted, but very creative.

But as you can see, it's set up like a movie, like there's camera angles.

What did you think when you realised how much money could be made from this?

Couldn't really believe it. I mean, I wasn't really using it because I was making videos.

I was in a lucky position where I started it at the right time.

YouTube just grew exponentially over that time.

So a platform with that many eyes on it is going to make money.

Dan was his own production house, making two videos every day.

With anything when it's growing, it gets a little bit addictive.

You're like, oh, I can keep uploading and then try out new things, see if they work, see if they don't.

Can you walk out the door and not be recognised?

Or are you somebody who gets recognised and has to wear a hat?

It literally happens every day.

I have made a lot of videos, a lot of them.

Age 31, this year, Dan TDM announced a scaling back from making videos.

He's been open about struggling with depression after becoming a parent during the pandemic.

I think if you're making content at that rate, whether it's YouTube,

even if you're like a musician or a playwright, you're a writer,

if you're doing something every day, you're going to burn out at some point.

I need a break.

Do you feel like you're taken seriously as a creative?

It did take a long time because people thought, oh,

they see the 20-minute video, you just record it for 20 minutes, uploaded it, that's it.

But now I think there is that respect there.

If you're successful on the platform, you're doing something right, you are creative, or you're just good at what you do.

Dan sells out arenas, a British success story, at a time when the internet has become more and more central to our lives.

Katie Razzle talking there to YouTuber Daniel Middleton.

More than 140 years after his death, a lock of hair from an Ethiopian prince has been handed over to the Ethiopian authorities.

Prince Alameo was taken at the age of seven by British soldiers in 1868 after his father, the emperor, was defeated in battle.

Our Africa regional editor Richard Hamilton was at the ceremony in London when the royal's hair was presented to Ethiopia's ambassador in the UK.

It was a traumatic moment in the history of Ethiopia, then known as Abyssinia.

An expedition of British forces defeated those of Emperor Teodros at the Battle of Magdala.

Rather than be captured, Teodros chose to kill himself.

A British army captain, Tristram Speedy, who'd been a friend of the emperor, took his seven-year-old son Alameo under his wing and back to Britain.

Queen Victoria saw to it that he was educated here, but Alameo caught pleurisy and died when he was just 18.

The captain's descendants who live in New Zealand flew to Britain to hand over the lock of hair on Thursday.

Alula Pankhurst is a member of the Ethiopian National Heritage Restitution Committee.

It's really very touching that this family has brought this lock of hair all the way 9,000 kilometres from New Zealand to this ceremony because they felt it would be better, more significant, create something that would inspire young people and interest people in the history.

And not just Alameo's hair, but also in the envelope was a lock of Captain Speedy's hair.

They've travelled all the way to Britain, all the way to New Zealand, back to Britain, and we'll go back to Ethiopia.

So it's a very touching and moving tribute.

There have been calls for Alameo's body to be repatriated as well, but Buckingham Palace has said removing his remains could affect others buried in the catacombs of St George's Chapel in Windsor.

Other items that were handed over at the ceremony in London included a sacred tablet or tabot considered a huge significance to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The British Museum currently holds 10 tabots.

Paul Boateng is a former British Cabinet Minister and member of the Upper House of Parliament, the House of Lords.

He's been campaigning for the tabots to be returned to Ethiopia. All these objects are of huge significance in Ethiopia, but also to Africa. The fact of the matter is that they were looted, they were stolen, and they're now being given back. And that's an example, an example to all, including the British Museum, which is the biggest depository of stolen goods in the world. Their failure to be accountable, their failure to be transparent, their failure to address these issues openly and publicly is frankly a national disgrace. Across Europe, several former colonial powers, such as France and Germany, have begun to return precious artifacts to Africa. The British Museum is still reluctant to be part of that growing movement, although it has suggested lending them to Addis Ababa. But gestures like this, giving a lock of imperial hair and a sacred object back to Ethiopia, will increase the pressure on the institution. And that's it 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, send us an email. The address is globalpodcast.bbc.co.uk. You can also find us on X, formally known as Twitter, at Global NewsPod. This edition was mixed by Pat Sissons and the producer was Carl Josephs. The editor is ever is Karen Martin. I'm Valerie Sanderson, until next time. Bye-bye. Hi, this is Janice Torres of Yo quiero dinero. Look, some choices in life are complicated. Others, thankfully, are much simpler, like choosing truest one checking. There are no overdraft fees, lots of practical perks, and when your life evolves and account balances grow, your perks upgrade automatically. So visit a branch or truest.com slash one to open an account. Truest one checking is one simple choice. Truest bank, member FDIC. With Staples Business Advantage, you get the benefit of thousands of experts. Plus optimizations powered by the latest technological innovations. One plus one equals two, three. Whatever, sign up today and save 20%. Staples Business Advantage. Business is human.