

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / US and Iran swap prisoners

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In late 2007, the remains of a young woman from the Casca Nation were discovered in the Yukon Woods.

I always think about, I want to know what really happened.

So I travel north to try to understand what happened and who was involved.

It's a pretty big risk to come forward with the information that I have.

I'm David Ridge and this is Someone Knows Something Season 8,

The Angel Carlet Case, available now.

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

I'm Janet Jalil and at 14 hours GMT on Monday, the 18th of September, these are our main stories.

Five American prisoners who've been detained for years in Iran are now flying home as part of a complex exchange deal mediated by Qatar. Russia tries to get a case brought against it by Ukraine thrown out of the International Court of Justice.

A lawsuit accuses the Australian government of failing to protect the Great Barrier Reef from climate change.

Also in this podcast, the man known as the grandfather of Russian rock music has this message for his fellow citizens about Ukraine.

As we record this podcast, a plane has taken off from Iran, flying five Americans to freedom.

The dual nationals, four men and a woman, had been imprisoned in Iran for years.

But after months of painstaking negotiations mediated by Qatar, they've now been released as part of a complex prisoner swap.

Six billion dollars of Iranian oil money, which had been frozen by sanctions, were first sent to banks in Doha, and five Iranians held in US jails are also being released.

The deal has been criticised by both Iranian activists and leading US Republicans.

They say it will only encourage more hostage-taking.

Washington says it's keeping pressure on Iran by imposing new sanctions on Iranian officials, including the former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, for their involvement in the detention of American

citizens. Our Chief International Correspondent, Lise Dusset, is in Doha. She's been speaking to my colleague, Tim Franks. There's a growing sense of anticipation here at the lounge, at Doha's old international airport. There's been a growing hubbub over the last few hours. American diplomats are said to be here, Qatari officials. I've also spotted Iranian diplomats arriving here at this terminal. And we're expecting that the plane, which has left Iran, will be landing here the first stop on finally their journey home by five American prisoners,

described by the U.S. as wrongfully detained, but widely regarded as hostages. We know the identities of at least three of them, Siamak Namazi, who spent nearly eight years in Iran's notorious Evin prison, Imad Shargi, another businessperson, and Murad Tabar, 67 years old, who holds British nationality as well. He's one of the environmentalists who'd been detained by Iran. He was expecting to go home last year to Britain, but he had been left behind there. We've also heard the two of the Iranians released from American prisons as part of this deal have now landed in Doha. So it is unfolding to get a better sense of the complexities of this controversial, but indeed very compassionate deal to end this personal ordeal, painful ordeal for the prisoners. I've been speaking to Mehran Kamarava. He's a professor of governance here at Georgetown University in Doha. I asked him, how would he describe this deal? It's yet another episode in this long and tortured relationship between Iran and the United States. The money, of course, rightly belongs to Iran. It is a result of Iranian oil sales to South Korea. And of course, it used to be seven billion dollars. Now it's somehow been reduced to six billion. But it is a step in the right direction in terms of the release of the prisoners and also some funds being injected into the Iranian economy and therefore helping the Iranian middle classes. As you know, there's been a lot of criticism of the deal. It's being said that this is money that Iran will use for other purposes. What do you say to the critics? Well, I am aware of the criticism, but the money is going to either directly or indirectly help the Iranian economy and therefore the salaried middle classes, the lower middle classes, those people who are the real victims of the sanctions, the government, the political elite is still there. In fact, because of the sanctions, because of maximum pressure, both under Trump and now under Biden, the government has become more hardline and the middle classes continue to suffer. The government's policies haven't changed, regime change hasn't occurred. And it's really the average Iranian who's bearing the brunt of the sanctions. Iran has been doing it for decades, taking dual nationals effectively hostage. Is this really one of the diplomacies of choice for the Iranian regime? This is a diplomacy of desperation. It's a diplomacy that Iran has to resort to in order to put pressure on the United States. There are very few levers that Iran has on the U.S., the U.K. and the European Union. One is the nuclear file, enrichment in particular, and the other is taking dual nationals as prisoner. But do you fear that there will be more taken prisoner, taken hostage? I wouldn't be surprised, yes, if there are in the future, if there are more prisoners that who are taken hostage. That is a constant fear for all of us, millions of Iranians who live outside the country, who love the country, who have deep roots in the country, want to go back. Every time I go back, my batteries get charged. I feel at ease with myself. But unfortunately, folks like me and millions of others like me take a huge risk going to Iran. Mehran Kamrava of Georgetown University, Qatar, ending that report by Lise Doucette. Russia and Ukraine are facing each other today, not on the battlefield, but in court. A case in the Hague was brought to the International Court of Justice by Ukraine just days after Russia's invasion last year. Kiev argued that Moscow falsely abused international law by saying its invasion was necessary to prevent a genocide in Ukraine. Today, the Kremlin is trying to get the case thrown out, arguing that it falls outside the remit of the UN court. Our reporter in the Hague, Anna Holigan, told us more. These hearings represent a pivotal moment in the grand scheme of things, because it's a decision

over jurisdiction, but it will determine whether or not this case actually continues. So the judges have to decide whether the International Court of Justice, the UN's highest court, has a legal mandate to deal with the merits, so the meat of this lawsuit. And today, lawyers representing Russia are trying to get the entire thing thrown out by arguing that the ICJ doesn't have jurisdiction, because it says under the genocide convention, which is a convention under which Ukraine brought this case to the ICJ, there is no ground to cover the use of force between states. So that is essentially Russia's argument today. And how long are we expecting this to go on for? Well, so Russia speaks today, tomorrow Ukraine. Interestingly, on Wednesday, we will hear from the 32 states intervening. So 32 other countries have intervened on Ukraine's side, arguing this case should go ahead and that the ICJ is the right place to hear the merits of this case. And the merits of this case, as you mentioned, Kiev accused Moscow of distorting reality by using, it said, baseless claims of a genocide in eastern Ukraine as a pretext for launching a full blown invasion. So it was just a couple of days after Russian tanks rolled across the border that Ukraine brought this case to the ICJ. And we've already had an interim ruling. So in March 2022, the judges called on Russia to cease all hostilities overt and covert and for both sides to avoid doing anything that could escalate the tensions even further. But as we have seen since, Russia ignored that ruling. And the issue with this court really the challenge is that it doesn't have any powers of enforcement. So although the rulings are legally binding and legally binding on Russia too, because Russia and Ukraine have both signed the genocide convention,

but there are no powers of enforcement. So if it goes ahead, Russia could ignore it, but it could still help victims with any future reparations claims if Russia uses this case in its entirety. So that's if the court was to rule against Russia. So that that would be the difference precisely even if Moscow ignored it. Exactly, exactly. Yes. And also with these cases, international justice cases, they set precedence. So there are a number of other cases against President Putin, but also against Russia being hurt here in the Hague. So any decision in this case that the ICJ could influence others too. Anna Holigan. Environmental activists have launched a lawsuit against the Australian government accusing it of failing to protect the Great Barrier Reef from the effects of coal mining on climate change. Phil Mercer reports. Campaigners insist the environment minister has a legal responsibility to prevent new coal and gas projects damaging Australia's ecological gems, including the Great Barrier Reef. It's facing many threats such as warmer ocean temperatures that have led to widespread coral bleaching. Activists are taking their case to the federal courts. They want all mining projects in Australia to be properly assessed for their potential impact on climate change. The government says it has ambitious environmental policies and recently refused to approve a new coal mine to protect the barrier reef. Phil Mercer, an notorious anti-migrant campaign group in South Africa, has registered as a political party ahead of next year's general election. Operation Dodula, which means Operation Force Out in Zulu, is promising to take its campaign against undocumented foreign nationals to the country's parliament. BBC Africa eyes Ayanda Charlie reports from Johannesburg. These men are riding in the back of a pickup truck in South Africa's Soweto township. They're on a mission to confront a local shopkeeper who is in dispute with his landlady over rent. Let's start with the documents that allow you to work in this country. They say they're here to engage with him. But within minutes, the situation turns ugly.

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If you are disrespectful to us, we will beat you up. I have a whip right there. Don't think that we're afraid of you. Without papers to prove his residency, the shopkeeper from Mozambique is forced

out of his business by Operation Dodula, an anti-migrant campaign group and newly formed political party. BBC Africa Eye has been filming with them for the past two weeks.

What gives you the right for them? I'm a citizen. I'm a citizen. I have my license.

I have my idea. I have everything. You're not vigilant.

They say they want all undocumented migrants to leave South Africa.

We grew up in an upper tea time where things were much better than what it is now.

The law was the law. But now things are happening. The government is feeling us in law.

But critics accuse Dodula of xenophobia and vigilantism.

Good morning. How are you? I'm at a market in the centre of Johannesburg.

Annie Michaels helps to support the traders here, who are mostly migrants.

The migrants, they are the poorest of the poor and they are vulnerable.

They'd rather go to them and rattle them instead of rattle the cages of the guys living in the glass houses. Hundreds gathered in central Johannesburg for Operation Dodula's conference.

The mood is celebratory. But listen to some of the words.

This man is singing, we will go to the gas station, buy some petrol and burn the foreigners.

At the conference, members vote overwhelmingly in favour of becoming a political party.

Zandile Dabula is the president and hopes to lead the party in next year's general election.

You've managed to gain a following on the singular message that foreigners must go.

Is that not running on hate? We must be realistic here that most of the problems that we have are caused by the influx of foreign nationals. We were at an operation yesterday. What was supposed to be a conversation very quickly turned into a confrontation. In some instances, you need to really be harsh. We don't promote violence and we don't want people to feel harassed.

But I'll tell you that at some stage we really need to push harder.

The ruling ANC party has been in government for almost 30 years. But against the backdrop of a failing economy, rampant criminality and widespread corruption, polls show that support for the party

has been declining. Operation Dudula is hoping to fill that vacuum.

I end up Charlie reporting and if you want to hear more on that story,

you can find the full film on the BBC News Africa YouTube page.

Just search for fear and loathing in South Africa.

Still to come in this podcast, the case for big businesses to help preserve nature.

Think through the loss of biodiversity. Think through water shortages or water

stress and how all of those issues manifest, let's say, in a drinks company or on a farm

that is farming degraded land. In late 2007, the remains of a young woman from the Kaska Nation were discovered in the Yukon Woods. I always think about, I want to know what really happened.

So I travel north to try to understand what happened and who was involved.

It's a pretty big risk to come forward with the information that I have.

I'm David Rigen and this is Someone Knows Something Season 8, the Angel Carlic case. Available now.

Welcome back to the Global News Podcast. Elite Women's Tennis has returned to China for the first time in more than three years after the Women's Tennis Association ended its boycott

over concerns about the tennis star, Peng Shui. Events were first cancelled because of the pandemic, but then in 2021, the WTA suspended its tournaments in China after the tennis player accused a top government official of sexual assault. She then disappeared from public view for several weeks, sparking an outcry amid fears over her safety. When she reemerged, she denied making the allegation.

At the time, the WTA's Chief Executive, Steve Smith, said no tournaments will be staged in China until Peng Shui's claims were investigated. We're not going to walk away from this and we're not going to allow this to be swept away without the appropriate respect and seriousness of the allegations that have been reflected or appropriately addressed. Well, today, a WTA tournament got underway in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou. So what's happened to bring about this U-turn? Asia Pacific editor is Mickey Bristow. Essentially, what the WTA said was that they were simply not going to get their demands met. Their demand was for there to be a thorough investigation, independent investigation into the allegations made by Peng Shui.

They decided they weren't going to get that investigation, I think correctly, because China has always tried to simply ignore these allegations. It was never going to hold an investigation. There's no independent body in China anywhere to hold an investigation. So a WTA was faced with a decision to either continue indefinitely, forever perhaps, or go back. And they decided that they would go back to China. Partly, they said, because it was damaging fans and tennis players in China that the continuation of this ban.

Because WTA tournaments in China are extremely lucrative.

They are, and that's another reason that people said that they were going back on what they said earlier, the WTA, that is. It's simply money. Before the pandemic, I think 10 out of 60 tournaments taking place around the world were in China. Remember, China was the second biggest economy in the world, looking to integrate itself into the sporting world, all kinds of sports. So obviously, the China circuit was very lucrative. And many people said, okay, you just went back for the money. And that is something which is an accusation hard for the WTA to deny. I mean, if you just look, there's a series of tournaments taking place over the next few weeks in China. One at the end of the month in Beijing has got a prize money of \$8 million. So you can just see there's a lot of money at stake.

And what do we know about Peng Shui herself?

Very little, really. I mean, after making the allegations, she took that down. That was taken down. It was on social media. She then came out and said on a number of different places and in a number of different interviews that she went back on what she said. She didn't really mean what she

said. But nothing has really been heard about her since she said she just wanted to spend time with her family. And we presume that's what she's doing. But in China, there's no way to independently verify her conditions, her situation, no independent authority to check on her and really check on the allegations actually made. So really, we don't know what condition she's in. We don't know any more really than we did two years ago.

Our Asia Pacific editor, Mickey Bristow. The UN General Assembly is holding its annual climate week in New York. And at the city's stock exchange, a task force backed by the UN is unveiling a new

framework to help big businesses understand and mitigate the effects their work has on the natural

environment from animal habitats to soil health. Dr. Nina Seeger of Cambridge University is an advisor to this task force on nature-related financial disclosures. She told my colleague, Michelle Hussein, what this is all about. 40 members of finance and business community have come together and created a framework to allow organizations, both businesses and financial firms, to think about their risks, nature-related financial risks, but also the impacts that they have on nature. Effectively, we know that nature loss is a major issue today. We are in a nature crisis. And this task force has been convened two years ago to think through how do we see the effects of that nature loss within the business community? And how can the business community work to mitigate those effects? How is it different from the ESG Environmental and Sustainability metric that already goes into company annual reports? So effectively, a lot of the ESG metrics that are currently looked at have to do with climate. So as part of the environmental field, what we need to do as part of this task force and more generally is to think through the wider issues. Think through the loss of biodiversity that is driven by, for example, the loss of insects, the loss of pollination. Think through water shortages or water stress. Think through land degradation. And how all of those issues manifest, let's say, in a drinks company or on a farm that is farming degraded land. And how all of those issues cause very material, already existing financial risks into those companies, as well as how are all of those companies impacting nature around them? Do you therefore want companies to think in terms of their nature footprint as well as their carbon footprint? Absolutely. And what's really, really key is that this framework doesn't only look at the risk element, it looks at the impact on the footprint element so that what we can all work together to mitigate that footprint from the get-go. Or to offset it, because offsetting is not something that everyone's in favor of, that essentially displaces a form of activity. But are you saying if a company, for example, puts up a factory, it is almost certainly going to displace wildlife, depending on where it goes. But all of these kinds of things could come into it. What is your answer to that? So offsetting should be in general used as a very last case resort. I think so if you think about a farm that potentially can be farming degraded land, it has reduced productivity. And therefore, it's actually not only that it has impacts nature around it, but it is bad for its profits, it's bad for its business. So if it starts bringing in measure to improve the soils, to make the soils more healthy, not only does it start improving the nature around it, but it also improves its profitability.

Dr Nina Sieger. The Gold Coast is one of Australia's most popular surfing destinations, not just for humans, it appears, but animals as well. Surfing dogs have been spotted on the beaches before, but it's a video of a man surfing with his pet python that's been getting people's attention recently. Unfortunately for the owner, it also caught the attention of wildlife protection officers. Chantal Harfield has the story. The video set to this music shows Igor Fyodor standing on his board riding huge waves at Rainbow Bay with his three-year-old snake Shiver wrapped around his neck. In another shot, the snake is resting on the board with Igor paddling his legs in the water. He describes Shiver as a natural and says she's been surfing at least 10 times before. Usually when she doesn't like something, she starts hissing, but she doesn't hiss in the water, she's always chill, he said. It seems that was Shiver's last ocean outing, after seeing the video which featured in Australian media, Queensland wildlife officials were concerned for the python's well-being and the safety of the public. They said taking

native pets out in public could cause them unnecessary stress and could make them behave in an unpredictable way. They've now fined Mr Fuser one and a half thousand US dollars for breaching the conditions of owning his snake. Shiver isn't the first animal to find fame for surfing at Rainbow Bay, as well as several dogs. A duck named Duck is a regular.

Truly it's not something we pushed. We just had him come along to the beach with us because that's what we do as a family. We would have to wave and he'd just follow us and we realised it was fun and so wanted to do it too. That report by Chantal Hartle.

Solar panels are already a familiar sight around the world from powering individual homes or businesses to huge arrays producing electricity for national supplies. But what if huge solar farms could be built in space, generating power 24 hours a day and beaming it back down to earth? The British astronaut Tim Peake told my colleague Nick Robinson the idea was close to becoming affordable. Up there you've got permanent sunshine if you put your solar farm in the right orbit. You can get more efficient panels because the sun's not going through the earth's atmosphere so it's not being scattered and you can build very very lightweight structures that don't have to withstand earth's gravity. But of course it's always been very expensive to get there. Now we're approaching the era where the cost of access to space is coming down though and so it becomes viable. What's changed to make it affordable? One of the biggest changes have been steps in rocket technology in particular companies like SpaceX. It used to cost about two and a half thousand dollars on a fork and nine to get to space that's per kilogram and then the fork and heavy brought it down to about fifteen hundred dollars and now with Starship Elon Musk's new massive rocket we could see costs as low as a hundred dollars per kilogram. Now the European Space Agency has done a study called Solaris which is looking at these solar farms and how viable they might be and I've said that once we get to less than a thousand dollars per kilogram it becomes economically viable so it's very exciting times ahead.

Now you and I are of the age where we remember the excitement we felt at the Apollo launches. Of course younger people were excited about your launch into space. Do you think it continues to have that hold on people's imagination? Oh completely I think it's growing even more so. We're in this new era of space exploration. Four of my friends are busy in training right now for Artemis II which will launch either late next year or into 2025 going back to the moon a kind of Apollo 8 rerun in a different orbit but it's going to be so exciting for new generations on Artemis III which you'll follow soon after to actually watch humans once again on the surface of the moon. Astronaut Tim Peake. Boris Gorenchikov has been called the grandfather of Russian rock music a pioneer who defied Soviet era censorship to release hugely popular underground albums beginning in the 1970s. Gorenchikov now lives in London and has been labelled a traitor by the Kremlin for opposing the war in Ukraine. His latest project is a charity album called Hill the Sky to benefit a Ukrainian children's hospital and it features songs from his many famous friends including Marianne Faithful, Dave Stewart of the Eurythmics and Stevie Nicks of Fleetwood Mac. He spoke to my colleague Victoria Uwonchunder.

The sole reason for doing this album not even doing this album asking people to donate a song is because we always pay attention to the political side of the conflict.

The night is so bright you could look for a needle in the moon lit with silvery light and I happen to have a lot of friends in Ukraine because we play the dozens and dozens and dozens of times and I know that the people they kind of wonder why we are being shot at why are we being shelled have the world gone mad have the world forgotten

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about us that we are human we are alive and that's what people write to me until the morning
I'll carry you home I will carry you home my dear one
and I thought that maybe if I could help get several dozen of songs especially songs
that nobody have heard or written especially for this compilation that would sort of remind the
people that yes we are not alone you are not alone we see you we hear you we think about you
tell us more about the artist that you got in touch with that you brought on that donated as
you said a song to the album well I happen to have good connections or even friendship with
some of the most brilliant writers and musicians of the generation so you know I addressed
my old friend Dave Stewart and he immediately came back with a new with a new song that we
finished together I'll say goodbye to you mother I hope one day that I'll come back home
father please don't watch me go
and I also drafted a Ukrainian friend of mine very popular and then people like Ian Anderson from
Jeff Rotal or you know Mary and Faith or Crowded House you raise the money for a Ukrainian
children's
hospital you've also been very vocal against the Russian government I wonder knowing that you've
been fined as well I'm quoting here what you've been fan for what they call discrediting the
Russian armed forces you're laughing here Boris but for those who are listening I just want what
do you make of all of this I said what I thought because when we have in 21st century in the middle
of Europe one country attacks the other without any pretext without any excuse just because they
want the empire to go on I mean this is surreal this is a nightmare what is the hope for for Russia
from you what do you hope for Russia at the moment I just hope to establish as many bridges
with normal people as I can and try to help them somehow I know the paranoid condition they're in
I know it's I've spent most of my life under this condition so only now it's like deadly
that was Russian rock star Boris Krobenchikov who has brought together a host of musicians to raise
funds for a Ukrainian children's hospital 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 with topics
covered you can send us an email the address is globalpodcastatbbc.co.uk you can also find us
on ex formerly known as twitter at global news pod this edition was produced by Peter Goughan
it was mixed by Chris Lovelock the editor as always is Karen Martin I'm Jeanette Joliot until next
time
goodbye