

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / US strikes targets in Syria

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A series of strange and violent deaths rocked Osage County, Oklahoma a century ago. Sisters Rita, Minnie, Anna and their mother Lizzie all left behind lucrative rights to the oil beneath Osage land while lawman Tom White was horrified by the chilling plot he uncovered. Join me, Tim Harford, host of the Corset Me Tales podcast for my new two-parter on the Osage killings, the story behind the book and film Killers of the Flower Moon. Both episodes are available now, wherever you get your podcasts.

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

I'm Nick Kureishi and at 1400 GMT on the 27th of October, these are our main stories.

The US has carried out airstrikes in eastern Syria, raising questions as to whether the Israel Hamas conflict is spreading to neighboring countries.

This is raising tension another notch in the region and it will be seen, despite what the Pentagon says, it will be seen as connected. Israel has carried out its second ground incursion into Gaza in as many days as the UN gets ready to vote on calls for a ceasefire.

There's significant international pressure for Israel to either call a ceasefire or to reduce the intensities of its operations.

And in the US, a manhunt is underway in Maine for a missing gunman who killed 18.

Also in this podcast, I think that Twitter is dying. I think it's just dying right now.

And I don't think Twitter users like me want it to die because it's become such a valuable resource for me. It's been a turbulent year for Twitter, now X since Elon Musk's controversial takeover.

But what's next for the platform?

The US has carried out airstrikes against two weapons and ammunition storage facilities in eastern Syria. It says we're used by Iran's revolutionary guards. The Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the strikes were in response to recent attacks on American bases in Iraq and Syria by Iranian backed militia groups. Ben Rhodes, a White House advisor who works closely with Barack Obama on Iranian and Middle Eastern policy says he's worried about a wider conflict growing.

I think what you're going to have is a tinderbox where things are flaring up in different places. And it might be southern Lebanon at one day, it might be Syria another day, it might be Iraq, it might be Yemen. There's just a lot of risk here and a lot of capability across this region.

And so if you continue to light that tinderbox on fire, at some point it's going to catch. For more on what happened, I've been speaking to the BBC's Middle East analyst, Sebastian Usher. The Pentagon has said that it was two fighter planes, two US F-16 fighter jets that carried out the attacks on two facilities. This is an area right up against the border, the east of Syria with Iraq. It's been a flashpoint for a very long time. It was a flashpoint during the war against ISIS, both in Iraq and in Syria. So I mean, what the US I think is doing at the moment is pretty playing down the significance of this particular strike, saying it was narrowly targeted sort of business as usual, rather than saying that it's a major shift in its strategy across the region as a result of what's happening in Gaza. But we do know that there have been reinforcements of US troops brought into the region, some 900 troops have arrived. And also from the early days of this conflict, there was a deployment of US warships in the region, in preparation perhaps to deter Iran if it wanted to get directly involved, which still seems unlikely rather than using its proxies, and also to protect its troops who still remain in the region. So how is this related, if it is indeed to what's going on in Israel and Gaza? I think the relationship is pretty obvious, really. I mean, although the US hasn't overstressed it and hasn't said that Iran, as far as we know, has literally ordered these attacks. But what we've seen is that the Iranian-backed militias both in Iraq and in Syria had not carried out these sorts of drone strikes on the remaining US bases in those two countries for some months. And now we've seen a big uptick. I mean, around 20 US troops have been injured in these attacks. There have been at least 12 of them. So it can't be a coincidence this is happening. So whether they're operating these groups on their own initiative, knowing that this is what Iran would want and also to fulfill their role of trying to make things difficult for other US in the region, I mean, there's an open question at the moment. But I mean, we're bound to see more of this happening. And this is how Iran, if it gets more directly and more deeply involved in what's happening in Gaza, will try to accomplish its objectives through these proxies. I mean, we have them in Iraq, we have them in Syria, of course, we have them in Hezbollah. On the northern Israeli border in Lebanon, in Yemen, the Houthi movement there, they've been reported to have fired one or two missiles towards the region as well. So I mean, this is a slowly building front, essentially, that Iran will be hoping and will potentially be ordering, if necessary, to spread amongst its proxies across the region as the situation in Gaza develops.

Sebastian Usher. Israel says it's carried out its second ground incursion into the Gaza Strip in two days. According to the army, infantry and armoured units entered eastern Gaza city to target Hamas fighters. The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has insisted a full offensive is coming. The military operations into Gaza come as there's increasing international pressure for aid to enter the territory, as civilians suffer the consequences of war. The UN General Assembly is also voting on an immediate ceasefire in Gaza later on Friday. We'll have more on the crisis inside Gaza in a moment. But first, our correspondent, Wira Davis, is in southern Israel and gave us the latest on the Israeli incursion into Gaza.

Wira Davis. This was a little bit smaller, according to the images that we've received from the Israeli army than the bigger incursion of the night before. Both of them say Israel have been preparing the ground for what is still expected to be a full-scale invasion of Gaza in order to achieve this objective of defeating Hamas militarily altogether.

Overnight, we saw a few Israeli tanks in the middle of the Gaza Strip going in for a couple of kilometres to attack a specific Hamas-related position, according to Israel. Israel says its

objective was achieved without any injuries to the Israelis, and they quickly withdrew. The previous night, a significantly greater number of Israeli tanks and bulldozers were filmed going into the Gaza Strip, conducting military operations, but also appearing to clear tracks or paths, perhaps knowing what is to come whenever that will come, which is of course a full-scale invasion in order to achieve that objective. And this could go on. It might be precipitating an imminent military invasion. Of course, there's significant international pressure for Israel to either call or cease fire, or to reduce the intensities of its operations because of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and the fact also there are 220 hostages still being held in Gaza. Why hasn't the invasion come yet? This onslaught by Hamas was on the 7th of October. What's holding it up? It's a really good question and a question that many Israelis who support their government's military objectives, even if they don't support their government, a majority of Israelis have been supporting their military objectives because of the severity of what happened, of course, when 1,400 Israelis were killed by Hamas gunmen when they came over the border, as you say, nearly three weeks ago. I think the Israeli military has pretty quietly made it clear that it is ready to go in. But this is now a political question. Israel is covered on all of its borders, especially in the north, where Hezbollah is a serious threat. There are American ships off the shore warning Hezbollah in Lebanon and warning Iran not to get involved. So militarily, I think Israel is just about ready to go. It has been so for about a week or so. But Mr Netanyahu, Benjamin Netanyahu has got political considerations, not least the situation with the 220 hostages, of course, and there's increasing domestic pressure for him to perhaps try and secure the release of the hostages rather than his military objective. Since the killing of more than 1,400 Israelis by Hamas in the October the 7th attacks, there have been stark warnings that Israel's military response is punishing the civilian population of the Gaza Strip. The head of the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees says the last remaining services it's providing in Gaza are collapsing, as Israel continues its siege and bombardment. The Hamas-run health ministry says 7,000 people have been killed since the conflict began three weeks ago. Philippe Lazzarini from the UNRWA agency described the aid that had managed to get through to Gaza as crumbs. There have been intense negotiations and endless shuttle diplomacy to open a new humanitarian supply line. So far, it has only resulted in a handful of aid convoy. This will not reverse the fact that Gaza is being strangled. The people of Gaza feel shunned, alienated and abundant. Hospitals are either shut or under immense pressure due to dwindling fuel supplies, resulting in pregnant women being forced to give birth in dangerous conditions. The UN says there are approximately 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza caught up in the conflict. One of them, a woman called Jemana, has made an audio diary of her experience going into labor. She's been speaking to BBC Arabic's Dalia Haider. Jemana and her four-year-old daughter Tuleen are having a precious moment together. The 25-year-old journalist who's lived her entire life in Gaza Strip is nine months pregnant. Their lives are now punctuated by the sounds of distant blasts. Drones are a constant in the air. Pregnant women like me must go out for walks, but because of the war I am not able to go out even to buy food, so I have to walk inside the room. We have been without water for four days. This evening the water returned, but it is so weak, a trickle. Can you hear the sound of the drones?

My labor has begun, but I can't find anyone to take me to the hospital.

Taxi drivers are scared to leave their homes and they won't send an ambulance for a woman giving birth.

I had to go to a hospital in the middle of the strip. It is much smaller and less equipped.

When I got there, a house next to the hospital was bombed. The sound was so loud.

I went to the maternity room in shock.

They put me in a ruin. Originally for two beds and I was the third one. Other women had given birth.

One of them was on the sofa here, another on a mattress, and another in the corridor.

There is a lot of fear inside me because of the shelling everywhere.

I'm scared when on the road, scared when in the hospital.

Besides the labor pain and the shelling, all I could think about is to deliver my baby.

As I was giving birth, I was thinking how to survive with my baby, with the bombardment everywhere inside the Gaza Strip. In all of this, Jumana had managed to get a message to me that she was in labor at a Lauda hospital. But when I heard that Israel had given the hospital two hours to evacuate, I called her brother for an update.

It was some good news. A baby girl. Talia had been born on the evening of October 13th.

She looks like me and her dad and her older sister. When she wakes up from sleep and cries, she brings me back to life again.

At last, a feel of normality at home again. Talia's grandfather cuddles the newborn while praying to Allah. And as the new sisters finally meet face to face for the first time, Jumana can only hope for more peaceful times ahead.

Dalia Haider there speaking to Jumana, who is in Gaza.

Next, the manhunt for a US Army reservist suspected of murdering 18 people and injuring 13 others in a mass shooting in Maine is into a second day. Police say Robert Card is armed and dangerous and they're asking people to shelter inside their homes for safety. The search has been widened from New York to the Canadian border. Our North America correspondent John Sudworth reports from Maine. Maine is a state on edge. The streets deathly quiet as people in the town of Lewiston and the surrounding areas heed the warning to shelter in place and lock their doors. But for those involved in the urgent manhunt, it's a different picture. Outside the known address of the main suspect, the 40 year old former Army reservist Robert Card. With helicopters circling overhead, police use loud halers to urge him to give himself up.

Robert, you're under arrest, they say. Come out with your hands in the air.

All of this is taking place in the full glare of the media spotlight.

100 possibly more camera crews and reporters lined up here and rolling live on the action.

There's something more than a little odd about it. The hype and hullabaloo will last only as long as the news cycle of course. Then we'll all pack up, leave this tragedy behind until the next one.

But perhaps America's deadlock over meaningful gun reform doesn't have to last forever.

Maine is a strong hunting and fishing state where even Democrat politicians like congressman Jared Golden have voted against the Biden administration's efforts to ban military grade assault weapons.

Well now, in the light of what's happened, he's changed his mind.

I have opposed efforts to ban deadly weapons of war like the assault rifle you use to carry out this crime. The time has now come for me to take responsibility for this failure, which is why I now call on the United States Congress to ban assault rifles to the people of Lewiston, my constituents throughout the second district, to the families who lost loved ones,

and to those who have been harmed. I ask for forgiveness.

But with the search of the suspect's property eventually proving fruitless, there is deep nervousness here. A few hundred meters from where some of the shootings took place, I find local resident James Sosa. I do carry and the constitutional carry and I feel safer that way. And I know that people here downstairs know that I do and they felt much safer last night because of it. I wouldn't have felt so safe last night if I was not, you know, have my my guns in ammo. I wouldn't have. But I, you know, when it was time to actually wind down a little bit, I was able to go to sleep last night knowing that I had that by my side.

The fear on the streets of Lewiston highlights an irony of the gun control debate more generally. The more guns appear to be a threat, the more some seek the protection they believe they offer. The report from John Sudworth.

Coming up. Paul called me up and said he'd like to work on now and then. He put the base on, I put the drums on. The past meets the future as the Beatles use AI to produce what's described as their last song. And before we move on, here's Andrew Peach with news of this week's Happy Pod. Yes, this week is study from Shanghai looking at how Tai Chi can help people with Parkinson's. A tortoise called Frank found roaming in the spinach fields of British Columbia in Canada. How the computer game football manager has helped the national side in the African nation of Guinea-Bissau and the happiest person in the happiest country on earth. Finland. Please join me for half an hour of positive uplifting news stories in the Happy Pod available in this feed every Saturday.

The explanation is the podcast from the BBC World Service that goes beyond the spin exploring the important questions about long running stories and the latest global news. An honest explanation of the events shaping our lives. Search for the explanation wherever you get your BBC podcasts. Oh wow. Oh my God. I'm so excited. Thank you. That's the sound of Casey getting a random act of helpfulness. We just told him the helpful SoCal Honda dealers will be replacing his old manual wheelchair with a brand new power wheelchair and we paid him for sharing that story

on the radio. And we can help you too with a great deal on a reliable award-winning Honda like the 2023 Accord. To find the helpful SoCal Honda dealer near you and to submit a random act of helpfulness for someone you know, visit SoCalHondaDealers.com. A series of strange and violent deaths rocked Osage County, Oklahoma a century ago. Sisters Rita, Minnie, Anna and their mother Lizzie all left behind lucrative rights to the oil beneath Osage land while lawman Tom White was horrified by the chilling plot he uncovered. Join me, Tim Harford, host of the Corset Me Tales podcast for my new two-parter on the Osage killings. The story behind the book and film Killers of the Flower Moon. Both episodes are available now wherever you get your podcasts. The former Chinese Premier Li Kecheng has died of a heart attack at the age of 68. In March he stepped down as the second most powerful communist official after a decade and was replaced by a close ally of President Xi Jinping. The government has said it deeply mourns Mr Li's passing. A correspondent in Beijing, Steve McDonnell, told me more about the former Chinese Premier. The passing of Li Kecheng is causing a lot of sadness and shock here, not only because of the nature of his death, that he died so suddenly having a heart attack, that he was the number two leader in this country just months ago. But it's what he represented, which really is a sort of different approach to Xi Jinping. So he's seen as a pragmatist, much more interested in economics than ideology. Someone who would criticise what was going on here, who would acknowledge the

problems that China faced in order to find solutions. And it's a different way of approaching problems than, say, those in the party who would say, you never acknowledge any problems. You know,

you don't talk about what's going wrong because, well, frankly, they don't trust the public with that. Li Kecheng had a different approach to that. And of course, the most interesting thing is that at one point he could have been the leader of the country. And so at the moment of his death, some might be asking today, well, what might China have been like today had he been chosen instead of

Xi Jinping? Because he has a very different approach to that of the current leader.

We will never know. And increasingly sidelined, wasn't he towards the end of his career?

Yeah, he cut a pretty lonely figure in the Seven Man Politburo Standing Committee,

because he was from another time. That's one reason he was the last senior leader with connections to

the Hu Jintao era. Now we have everybody well and truly locked in with Xi Jinping and his way of doing things. Whereas under the previous administration, it was kind of like a collective leadership. And so at various times, there's Li Kecheng supposedly in charge of the economy, and at one point famously saying that there should be more street vendors in the streets of the big cities of China as a means of kickstarting the economy, which had really struggled during the COVID years. Well, within days of him saying that, the Beijing government made it very clear that those street vendors were not going to be allowed to return here, even though the Premier has said this. And I think that just showed the limits of his power. He tried as best he could to shape the country. But ultimately Xi Jinping's power is so great that it was hard for him to do, I think, many of the things he wanted to. How will President Xi likely react to the passing of Li Kecheng?

They don't want to generate public enthusiasm for Li Kecheng's way of doing things. Certainly, if it would seem to conflict with Xi Jinping's much more ideological approach. So on the one hand, they're going to speak about him and say what great things he did. But it could well be very low key as a means of maintaining things as they are right now.

Stephen MacDonald in Beijing. Now, the Beatles are arguably the most famous band of all time. And earlier this year, Paul McCartney revealed in a BBC interview that he'd been using AI to create what he called the final Beatles song based on a 1970s demo tape by John Lennon. Well, that track called Now and Then is set to be released next week. Our music correspondent, Mark Savage,

has more. The Beatles have come together for one last time. Next week, the band will release what they are calling their last song. The new single Now and Then started life as a home recording by John Lennon in the 1970s, but it was only finished last year. Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and Lennon's

son, Sean, announced the track in a short trailer. When we lost John, we knew that it was really over.

Paul called me up and said he'd like to work on Now and Then. He put the bass on, I put the drums on.

It's the last song that my dad and Paul and George and Ringo will get to make together.

Now and Then originated on the same cassette that produced this new Beatles song in 1995, but the audio was considered too damaged to be of use until now. New computer software,

trained on Lennon's voice, allowed the remaining Beatles to extract and refine his vocals. The new recording also includes a guitar part that George Harrison played before his death in 2001. It's been a long and winding road to get to this point, but Now and Then will premiere all around the world next Thursday. Mark Savage with that report. It's been a year since Elon Musk took control of Twitter, now known as X, after paying \$44 billion. Some people say it's freer and things can be said on the site that used to be banned, while others feel it's now a home for much more abuse and disinformation. Reporting from San Francisco, James Clayton.

The year ago, Elon Musk famously, infamously, walked into Twitter holding a sink. Let that sink in, he quipped, before firing huge swathes of its staff. Like this group of employees who filmed their last moments at the company. It was emblematic of his erratic leadership. He slept in the office,

changed Twitter's name to X, talked about fighting Mark Zuckerberg, who launched a rival to Twitter

called Threads over the summer. I got a taste of that unpredictability when I messaged him to ask him for an interview six months ago. A few hours later, he was telling me he'd appointed his dog to run Twitter. I'm not the CEO of Twitter. My dog is the CEO of Twitter. Okay. But although some have left the platform, it has been remarkably resilient. A year on X, formerly known as Twitter, still exists. Threads, Mark Zuckerberg's rival, has not been the Twitter killer that some have touted it to be. But it still has major problems. Despite what Elon Musk says, independent analysts like SimilarWeb's David Carr says that X's user base is falling. X has put out different numbers saying that things are going great. There must be something going on that we're not seeing. But basically everything is down on a year over year basis. Advertisers have also shunned the platform and the EU has criticised it for high levels of disinformation. He hired former advertising exec Linda Jacarino over the summer to try to bring them back. Many of you in this room know me and you know I pride myself on my work ethic. But buddy, I met my match. But some investors like Ross Gerber say that advertisers won't come back until the platform is better moderated. I think that Twitter is dying. I think it's just dying right now. And I don't think Twitter users like me want it to die because it's become such a valuable resource for me. But it's dying. So I don't care what Elon says. It doesn't matter what he says. There's a reality and there's a fantasy. The fantasy that Ross Gerber is referring to is Mr Musk's big dreams for X. This is what he told me he wants X to become. Twitter is an accelerant to X. What does that mean? What does it mean?

Well, I guess you'll have to stay tuned to find out. Ah, come on. We now know a little bit more. He wants X to do streaming games, video calls, banking, you name it, the everything app. That was embarrassing. Almost died. But ultimately, X still gets the vast majority of its revenue through advertising. If it's going to survive in the short term, it needs to bring them back. James Clayton there. The editor-in-chief of British Vogue, Edward Enninfall, has been named as the UK's most influential black person in an annual power list. Others recognised include The Dragons, Den Star and podcaster Stephen Bartlett. Our community affairs correspondent, Edina Campbell reports. Edward Enninfall started his career at ID Magazine at 18. Now 51, he's the first black man to hold the top job at British Vogue. But earlier this year, announced he'd be stepping down to help grow the brand globally and focus on other projects. The black power list celebrates people of African, African-Caribbean and African-American heritage. It aims to raise awareness among young people of black role models.

Other names to make the 2024 list include Lord Woolley, who co-founded Operation Blackvote and the comedian Mo Gilligan. Talking of power and success, Taylor Swift has become a billionaire according to new analysis from the media group Bloomberg. They say the singer is now one of the few artists to reach the milestone based solely on their music and performances. Our reporter, Adam Childry, has more. Taylor Swift is perhaps the biggest name in music right now. The US leg of her Eris tour is coming to an end and she'll be taking the show around the world, starting in South America next month. Bloomberg say ticket sales for her Eris tour shows performed to date have passed \$700 million, which have helped Swift's net worth reach \$1.1 billion. Olyriana, Jay-Z and Beyonce are also reported to have passed the billion-dollar mark. Since 2019, Swift is estimated to have earned \$400 million from the music she has released and her total Spotify and YouTube earnings are around \$120 million. The American pop star is also spreading the cash around, boosting local economies whenever she's in town. In Seattle, for instance, downtown hotel revenues reached a record high of \$7.4 million on the first night of her Eris tour. Swift has just released a new version of her album 1989, which features four new songs. It's her fourth album re-released since 2019 and it's part of her campaign to regain control of her own work after an investment company bought her master tapes. It will undoubtedly only add to the star's

ever-growing fame and fortune. That report from Adam Chowdhury.

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, formally known as Twitter,

at Global News Pod. This edition was mixed by Chesney Forks Porter. The producer was Olivia

Otaiba. The editor is Karen Martin. I'm Nick Kureishi. Until next time, goodbye.

Oh, that would be so beautiful. I could use that. I appreciate it.

That's the sound of Paula getting up. Random act of helpfulness. We just told her the helpful SoCal Honda dealers will be giving her yard a professional makeover. And we paid her for sharing that story on the radio. And we can help you too with a great deal on a reliable award-winning Honda,

like the 2024 CRV. To find the helpful SoCal Honda dealer near you, and to submit a random act of helpfulness for someone you know, visit SoCalHondaDealers.com. A series of strange and violent deaths rocked Osage County, Oklahoma, a century ago. Sisters Rita, Minnie, Anna, and their mother Lizzie, all left behind lucrative rights to the oil beneath Osage land, while lawman Tom White was horrified by the chilling plot he uncovered. Join me, Tim Harford, host of the Caught Me Tales podcast, my new two-parter on the Osage killings, the story behind the book and film Killers of the Flower Moon. Both episodes are available now wherever you get your podcasts.