Speaker 1 0:00

This is the global news podcast from the BBC World Service. I'm Nick miles and at 13 hours GMT on Wednesday, the 16th of June. These are our main stories. Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin are holding a much-anticipated summit in Geneva. But there's a little expectation of a breakthrough in the 10th us Russian relationship. North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un has warned of food shortages following poor harvests and...

Speaker 2 0:27

... to me voting is totally meaningless. I think these votes are not even counted. And these are just some kind of shows going on.

Speaker 1 0:35

Ahead of presidential elections in Iran, we find resignation at a lot of apathy. Also, in this podcast, we look at the latest violence between Israel and Gaza. How even wealthy nations are utterly unprepared for the impact of climate change. And a sponsor's nightmare. A global superstar rejects your product in front of the world's media. An 18th century Villa with pasal blue shutters and views across Lake Geneva in Switzerland. It is a serene setting. But as we record this podcast, the atmosphere between two of the world's most powerful men who are meeting there is likely to be anything but placid, President Biden fresh from his Alliance building g7 and NATO meetings, is sitting down for talks with a man who in the past is called a killer, Vladimir Putin. Washington takes issue with Moscow's record on human rights as well as alleged interference in its elections. Imogen Foulkes is our Geneva correspondent. And just before we came into the studio, she described the security operation underway in a city that's well known for hosting high level summit.

Speaker 3 1:43

We've got helicopters, we've got tanks, we've got police everywhere. I mean, just coming to the press center this morning, I don't know how many multiple barriers we went through walking because public transport to stop. I was talking to police who've been drafted in from all over Switzerland, and one lovely Geneva old lady ATF she's a day looking to have her morning cup of coffee by the lake. And unfortunately, no chance today. But as you say, Geneva is used to this. It was probably chosen because it can stage something this huge, very, very quickly at short notice. And that's what's happening in a couple of days. It'll all be back to normal, I think.

Speaker 1 2:22

So, Imogen, there was a handshake between the two men the photo ops of their respective number twos, if you'd like Secretary of State and Foreign Minister beside them and his room with a globe between the two men, we're expecting five hours of talks, no meal no sitting down together, what is on the agenda?

Speaker 3 2:39

Well, we know that Joe Biden has what he calls his red lines, he definitely wants to talk to Vladimir Putin about warn him about not encroaching into Ukraine, talk to him about his attitude towards Belarus, about cyber crime where the Americans think the Russians may not be actively doing it. But they're hosting some very talented cyber criminals who are holding American business to ransom wants to talk to him about that he wants to talk to him about human rights. Something almost certainly Vladimir Putin doesn't want to talk about. The one meeting of minds we might see in that would be good for all of us, is some discussion about nuclear weapons reduction. Interestingly, that's what Reagan and Gorbachev talked about all those years ago here in Geneva, and that did start something. But the atmosphere here is totally different than they had fireside chats, the pictures I've just seen of Vladimir Putin and Joe Biden, with that glow between them, separating them if you like, both looking very, very serious. So I think this is really a serious take the measure both of us saying what we want, maybe we'll go from there,

Speaker 1 3:50

and Imogen of the people you're speaking to their diplomats and other people, are they setting their expectations relatively low from this as well.

Speaker 3 3:57

I think the bar has been set very low. Indeed, we know that there's not even going to be a joint declaration, the two men have scheduled separate press conferences. So what I'm going to be listening for is, is there anything in those two press conferences, where they're saying almost the same thing where they're singing maybe a bit from the same hymn sheet, rather than all the differences, which they undoubtedly have. But let's not be downhearted. It's the start. They're in the same room. They're talking that's always good.

Speaker 1 4:27

Imogen Foulkes, our correspondent in Geneva they're North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un has warned that his country faces food shortages following really poor harvests. And he's told a meeting of senior officials that the situation is getting tense. It is a rare admission of difficulties from hundreds of 1000s of North Koreans died in a famine in the 1990s. And it's thought that 10 million people could be going hungry now. I asked our Asia Pacific editor Michael Bristow, exactly what should we make of Kim Jong Un's statement?

Speaker 4 4:59

Since the COVID pandemic began, North Korea has closed its borders. And so it's difficult to get information out of there. A lot of diplomats, foreign aid workers who actually lived in Pyongyang in North Korea have had to leave. So it's difficult to get information. But these comments by Kim Jong on saying that the situation is is getting tense that the farmers haven't met their grain targets for this year, is really a suggestion that things are pretty bad. We got to remember that in North Korea, the leadership is usually used to trumpeting the government's successes, whatever they, whether they're real or imaginary, they're not so used to talking about difficulties and problems. So the fact that they are doing now suggests things are pretty bad. Also, we know that the World Food Program has for several years been warning that 40% of North Korea's population that's about 10 million people are food insecure. They're basically hungry or malnourished. So this all rings true. What Kim Jong Un is saying today,

Speaker 1 6:01

And what is he blaming the shortages on?

Speaker 4 6:03

Specifically, he's pointing the finger at a number of typhoons, which hit North Korea last year, and North Korea susceptible to typhoons every year. But last year, there were three particularly big ones which came within the space of about a month. They cause widespread flooding and damage to crops. That's what the problem is. He said in this meeting in which he spoke to senior leaders, they also went on to discuss the other problem The world is facing at the moment, the pandemic, which was led to problems in North Korea as well and difficulties that was also alluded to. And of course, we've got to remember that on top of all that North Korea is subjected to international sanctions

imposed because of its nuclear programs. They've been running for several years, they were tightened under President Trump. So that is also a problem. So all these three things together, created this massive problem for North Korea at the moment.

Speaker 1 6:57

Michael Bristow, our Asia Pacific editor. Iran is about to hold elections to choose a new president. There are seven men competing to become the ninth president of the Islamic Republic. But the political situation there is volatile, as most reformist and centrist candidates have been barred from standing. And the country is also still struggling with international sanctions and a crippling economic crisis as the BBCs Rana Rahimpour reports.

Speaker 5 7:25

Over the past few weeks, Iranians saw candidates in state controlled televised debates, and it left little room for optimism. 23 year old Farima watch the second debate on Iran state TV.

Speaker 6 7:43

They didn't answer to the main questions. They just attacked each other and didn't share any plan with the people. I really don't know whether we should laugh or cry about it.

Speaker 5 7:58

The turnout is expected to be low. During the last presidential election in 2017, turnout was 73%. calls for boycotting this election are growing, especially for moderates and young people. A significant reason is that all of the well known reformist candidates are disqualified from running.

Speaker 2 8:19

Four years ago...

Speaker 5 8:21

Iliufar is 28 years old and is about to become a mother.

Speaker 2 8:25

I can say to me voting is totally meaningless for concrete that has a supreme leader. When you have a supreme leader, there is no need to choose any president because I think these votes are not even counted. And these are just some kind of shows going on. That's the final decision is all the time made by the leader. And for me election is totally rejected and not me, not my family. Anyone is going to vote we are all sure about that.

Speaker 5 8:53

But not having a real choice is not the only reason why many Iranians say they won't participate in this election. Iran's economy remains crippled as the result of decades of mismanagement, corruption, and us sanctions over its nuclear program. Buhtnoise is a 30 year old saleswoman from Tehran.

Speaker 7 9:16

we don't make any plans for the future, believe from day to day, according to the economic situation.

Speaker 5 9:26

But two years ago, Iranians were prepared to act in 2019 hundreds of protesters who were angry about the tripling petrol price were killed by government forces. Mothers of those who died have called for the election to be boycotted. Another reason for people's voting apathy is the downing of the Ukrainian airplane by Iran's Revolutionary Guard in 2020. 176 people were killed. including more than 20 children, and for three days Iran refused to take responsibility for shooting down the plain. After pressure from the west, Iran accepted that it had shut down the plane, but it never investigated the attack properly. Now, the presidential election is only adding to the fear of many in Iran, that all branches of power are soon to be dominated by ultra conservative hardliners. And they worry that darker days may be ahead

Speaker 1 10:32

Rana Rahimpour with that report. Today, the outgoing chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Court Fatou Bensouda will pass the baton on to her successor, Karen Kohn, a British lawyer. The ICC whose mandate is to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity has had some setbacks and successes recently, but according to Ms. Bensouda, it has broadened the scope of its investigations. Bala Masaru asked her how she would sum up her nine years at the helm of the ICC.

Speaker 8 11:04

It has been turbulent, of course, because that is the nature of this position. And with this mandate really comes great responsibility and fortitude, and I had no illusion whatsoever. And I have tried to give it my best. I have confronted many challenges. But there has also been quite a lot of achievements, which we can be proud of today.

Speaker 9 11:31

What would you regard is your achievement? Is it mainly the prosecutions in the Balkans and the war crimes that you've managed to secure there? Is it trying to investigate Myanmar? Or are there things closer to home on the African continent?

Speaker 8 11:45

Of course, there are many things closer to home, if you will look at for instance, our cases. In DRC, Bosco Ntaganda case which we have made enormous contribution to the development of international criminal justice, by pushing for the investigation and prosecution of crimes against girls and women sexual and gender based crimes that happens in the context of one's own military armed group. This was not international criminal justice before. But now we have that protection, we've been able to get that protection for those who are victims of these crimes. And just recently, we have had a conviction of Dominic Ongwen. In the in the situation in the Uganda, in which we have again, been able to ensure that the rape of women and men we've been able to secure convictions on on that we have been able to push the issue of cultural heritage, the destruction, the willful destruction of cultural heritage, and secured convictions there in the Almaty case, we have been able to contribute to an open investigations in this situation in Myanmar, Bangladesh, which as you know, we have been very innovative in trying to bring the ICC his contribution to that conflict.

Speaker 9 13:11

What would you say to the claim that many Africans have that they felt that the ICC was in appropriately your or the in a way its focus was directed more at the African continent rather than in other places?

Speaker 8 13:27

I would say that they are wrong. I would say that it was a criticism and an accusation that is biased. I would say that it was one that is without any legal basis and no justification because we all knew that that was a propaganda against the ICC for those who wanted to push that message forward. today. If you look at the landscape of where the ICC is, and the cases that we are investigating, and prosecuting it is both of course we have cases already in Africa. But we also have investigations ongoing in Georgia, in Afghanistan in Palestine. We are working in Colombia. We have opened investigations in Myanmar, Bangladesh, and we have been working in Venezuela. Yesterday, I just announced the opening of investigations in the Philippines. All of these are not on the African continent. The iccs work is not to target any particular continent. It will follow the evidence.

Speaker 1 14:25

Fatou Bensouda, who's finishing her term as chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, speaking to Bola Massara. And still to come in this edition of our podcast.

Speaker 10 14:37

We are now again back to close to 2000 people daily leaving Venezuela

Speaker 1 14:44

It`s a warning to the world about what's been dubbed the Forgotten crisis. To Gaza next, where this was the sound heard overnight. An Israeli airstrikes once again, lighting up the sky. Israel said that the attack was in retaliation for the release of incendiary balloons by men in Gaza. It's the first major clash in almost a month after 11 days of bloody fighting ended in a ceasefire. And it comes at a time when Israel's new government is just a few days old. Our correspondent Tom Bateman is in Jerusalem and gave me more details.

Speaker 11 15:22

There were Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip lasting around 10 minutes, Palestinians in Gaza City and in the south of the strip reported very loud, extremely powerful explosions. Israel said it was targeting Hamas militant sites where they believe that previously meetings have taken place. And there were facilities there, no reports of casualties. And that had happened after the sending of so called incendiary balloons over the perimeter fence something that's instructed by Hamas, they send groups of young men to the fence to send them over with burning objects attached and it sets fire to Israeli farmland. And all of that, in response to this ultra nationalist flag marched by Israeli nationalists as they headed down to Damascus Gate towards occupied East Jerusalem yesterday. And they were chants by some of those of death to Arabs and other racist slogans that the Israeli government or foreign minister later condemned.

Speaker 1 16:15

Now, the new Israeli government, the majority is wafer thin. There was pressure I suppose for the Israeli government to do something in response to these incendiary balloons.

Speaker 11 16:25

Yeah, I mean, the incendiary balloons Israel regards as a as a military attack effectively, that tactic has been used many, many times in the previous years. As far as the mass is concerned, I think it's sort of sees it as one of its lowest level military options in the hope that it wouldn't get too much of a response from the Israelis. So it's certainly a break in the ceasefire, although nothing like the sort of return to the intense hostilities we saw in the all out conflict of last month. And I think the hope would be that both sides regard this particular round as over and there are these ongoing and over intensive efforts by the Egyptians and others to keep a ceasefire holding,

Speaker 1 17:06

what's your assessment of the political will on both sides, particularly from Hamas, not to escalate things? Are there practical concerns for Hamas as well? I, quite frankly, its arsenal has been depleted so much.

Speaker 11 17:17

I mean, there are practical concerns. And certainly some of this tunnel networking in Gaza was was destroyed. Although it was clear, he still had the capacity to fire rockets even deep into Israel in you know, towards the final days of the last conflict, so it can do it again, I think the issue is much more as far as Palestinians are concerned is just really how much more Palestinians in the Gaza Strip can take. I mean, it's been unbelievably traumatizing and a desperate situation for people. That is a key consideration when the Israeli army has said that it is prepared for any eventuality including a return to hostilities. But as I say, I think that the desire to try to continue to de escalate to try and keep the ceasefire in broad terms. Holding is probably apparent on both sides. I mean, Hamas has taken a propaganda victory from the events of last month in a huge surge in support among Palestinians, it is politically energized. And that is a key factor. It might not want to continue to disrupt that. I think what happens in Jerusalem will be key, you know, the events of yesterday we saw once again, police acting in a way that Palestinians see as discriminatory as aggressive and that always has the capacity to reignite tensions.

Speaker 1 18:33

That was Tom Bateman, our correspondent in Jerusalem. Uganda is currently experiencing its second wave of Coronavirus with cases at their highest since the pandemic began. just over a week ago President Yoweri Museveni brought in a partial lockdown closing down schools and restricting travel between districts. It isn't yet known which variant is dominant there. Around 800,000 people have so far been vaccinated, but just naught point naught 1% of the population fully. Patience Atuhaire reports from Kampala.

Speaker 12 19:12

The police raid a bar in central Kampala on Saturday night. Many of the revelers run to hide but the police officers grab under arrest some. Bars have been officially closed since the first lockdown in March 2020. But despite the safety warnings and the 9pm curfew, some people are still determined to go out for a good time. Police crackdowns like these have become more frequent recently as authorities try to get a hold on the pandemic and they have good reason to worry. cases have been rising fast since late May, especially in Kampala and surrounding areas. Young people also account for a high number of hospitalizations in this new wave. I am at the ambulance bay. This is where patients who are critical with Coronavirus are being brought into the National Hospital in Mulago. I can see staff who are decked in PPE, preparing oxygen cylinders and preparing the

paperwork to receive the patients. I've been here standing at a safe distance for about 30 minutes and in that time, six ambulances have dropped off patients. Dr. Misaki Wayingera who heads a team of scientists that advise government on managing the pandemic says that they are worried for young people.

Speaker 13 20:36

Because young people are more socially engaged. They are the ones who go out look for bread and hunger living every other day. In terms of social networks. Younger people also have more interactions with friends, relative to the most senior people. So the young people must be cautious that the risk is clear to them. You have a bug out there that is waiting for them.

Speaker 12 21:06

Many fearing a second hard lockdown rush to beats the trouble deadline early last week and make it from Kampala to their villages. This raised concerns over a potential surge in cases in rural areas where infections are currently relatively low. And with hospital beds and oxygen supplies running out, and patient ages getting younger police raids and arrests like the one seen on Saturday night might become more common and more desperate as the new wave takes hold.

Speaker 1 21:37

That report was by Patience Atuhaire. Nearly 6 million Venezuelans have fled to neighboring countries to escape economic turmoil in their homeland. And they're overlooked and need more help from the international community. That's according to the UN refugee agency, which is holding a funding drive in Canada this week to draw attention to what's been described as the Forgotten crisis. Dr. Eduardo Stein is the Joint Special Representative for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. And his job specifically covers Venezuelan refugees and migrants, Lawrence Paul, I'd asked him how many people are leaving the country daily.

Speaker 10 22:18

After the shock of the covid 19 pandemic, all borders were closed. But people kept going out of Venezuela, although in very small number much smaller than what we witnessed

a year ago. However, numbers have begun to rise as of maybe two and a half months, two months. And we are now again back to close to 2000 people daily leaving Venezuela,

Speaker 14 22:52

Are they considered as economic migrants or refugees. It's an important point when you're trying to explain their case to the world to governments, you want them to give money at the donor conference, how do you present their situation,

Speaker 10 23:07

we present the situation in general terms as not necessarily fitting into the two categories of refugees or migrants. It is a rather mixed situation, because these are people that are coming out of a country that was extremely rich, which is not at war. And yet it is faulty in many basic services to the population, even in food, medicine, shelter, of course, access to jobs, decent income, etc. So people are leaving both because of a repressive environment, as well as a general lack of very basic resources trying to find other options in neighboring countries. And of course, as you will know, Colombia is the country that is receiving the most so by the end of the year. Right now we are about 5.6 million people that have left Venezuela, we calculate that if the rate keeps not going up, but being more or less in the same numbers that I mentioned to you about 1800 to 2000. Daily, we will reach the 6 million people by the end of this year.

Speaker 1 24:40

Delta Eduardo Stein are the Joint Special Representative for the UN refugee agency and the International Organization for Migration. And he was speaking to Lawrence Pollard. Now I hear in Britain we are famous for our habit of complaining about the weather, but in future It seems that we will have a lot More to complain about, including heat waves and flash floods. And the UK climate change committee has warned that Britain is shockingly unprepared for extreme weather caused by climate change. Baroness Brown is part of the advisory panel,

Speaker 15 25:14

we only have to look back to last summer, when we had six days in August, when temperatures in the southeast were 10 degrees above normal. I mean, that's, that's

extraordinary. And that's impacts of climate change, hitting us now in the UK. And it's going to get worse.

Speaker 1 25:35

Our environment analyst Roger Harrabin told me more.

Speaker 16 25:37

What this report is talking about is the other half of climate change, not mitigation of emissions, cutting emissions, but adaptation to the sort of changes that are now inevitably going to happen. Previously, the UK was planning so its infrastructure, its homes, its services, were resilient, up to a temperature rise of two degrees Celsius, that the latest science is that the UK needs to plan for up to a four Celsius, temperature rise. And there is a massive difference in that is really, really going to stretch the UK in terms of resilience on all sorts of goods and services, and infrastructure. And that's what this report is about. And I suspect, although it is UK dominated that many of the messages may well apply to other countries, too.

Speaker 1 26:24

Absolutely. We come on to that in a minute, Roger, but... But firstly, in terms of adapting to these huge changes, what are we talking about a

Speaker 16 26:32

huge infrastructure is needed. But what most preoccupies the committee is that they say when government is considering legislation, which has a potential element of climate adaptation, then that element of adaptation has to be in there. So over the past five years, for instance, the UK has built more than half a million new homes, which are unfit for the climate as is projected to be within a decade. Some of them the committee says are unfit already, there's a really big problem with flats, where there's been a big drive to insulate flats to stop the emissions that are causing climate change. But that's made it flat so airtight that they can't get sufficient ventilation to cold themselves in summer, which is now a serious problem.

Speaker 1 27:16

Roger, if this is the situation in a country like the UK, a very wealthy nation, the situation in poorer nations who want money from the rich world to help them adapt, it's got to be a lot worse.

Speaker 16 27:28

Well, it's doubly problematic because the rich world still has not given the poor world, the money, it promised to help them adapt. There are some things that can be done. I mean, one of the things that this report makes clear is that cities are key, you know, people living in cities where there's so much heat stored within the fabric of the buildings and the tarmac and the roads and the concrete. They can do basic stuff, like trying to plant wherever they can. And a lot of this happens in hot countries anyway. But you know, making sure that walls are painted white consistently to reflect the heat back a lot of countries as a traditional method of building with very thick walls, which holding the cool. So it's not out of the question that those things can be done.

Speaker 1 28:10

Roger Harbin, our environment analyst. Finally, when you pay top dollar to sponsor a global event you expect to get something for your money, don't you? Well, Coca Cola has got trouble. Its share price dropped sharply after the superstar footballer Cristiano Ronaldo, removed two bottles of coke from a press conference. The video was shared widely across social media. Our Charlotte Gallagher reports,

Speaker 17 28:34

Coca Cola is one of the official sponsors of the euro 2020 championships, and will have paid vast amounts of money for fans around the world to see its branding. But one of the tournament's most famous players snubbing the drink won't have been the publicity the drinks company was hoping for. Cristiano Ronaldo was appearing at a press conference ahead of Portugal's game with Hungary when he removed two bottles of Coca Cola from the desk in front of him before holding up a bottle of water, appearing to encourage fans to drink that instead. In the immediate aftermath, shares in Coca Cola fell dramatically, with the business seeing $4 billion wiped off its value. the share price is yet to recover. Ronaldo is known for his dedication to fitness, which has allowed him to continue playing top level football into his mid 30s. So it's perhaps unsurprising that he rejects sugary drinks. Coca Cola has said everyone is entitled to their drink preferences, and people have

different tastes and needs. Ronaldo is not the only player to seemingly reject one of the tournament sponsors. The Manchester United and France star Paul Pogba. was seeing removing a bottle of Heineken beer that was placed in front of him at a press conference. He didn't say why but as a Muslim, it's possible he didn't want to be filmed with alcohol,

Speaker 1 29:54

Charlotte Gallagher reporting and that's all from us for now, but there we'll be an updated version of the global news podcast later on. If you want to comment on this edition or the topics we've covered do send us an email. The address, as usual is global podcast at BBC.co.uk. This podcast was mixed by Craig Kingdom produced by Rahul Sarnaik. And the editor is Karen Martin. I'm Nick Miles and until next time, goodbye.

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