GAYLE KING: Israel rejects the U.N.’s call for a ceasefire as it intensifies strikes on Gaza ahead of a possible ground invasion to fight Hamas.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Israel-Hamas War]

JOHN KIRBY: It is bloody, it is ugly, and it’s going to be messy, and innocent civilians are going to be hurt.

(...)

7:02:26 a.m.
3 minutes and 7 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Israel-Hamas War; UN Calls for Ceasefire; Israel Launches 400+ Attacks in Gaza, Hospitals Overwhelmed]

KING: We’re going to begin as we’ve done every day for the last couple of weeks with the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza that’s drawing condemnation from world leaders. The United Nations’s secretary-general has now called for a ceasefire. Now he criticized Israel’s bombing campaign of Gaza because of the rising number of civilian casualties, a comment that prompted Israel’s ambassador to call on him to resign. Hamas officials in the territory say, more than 700 people were killed in Israeli airstrikes just yesterday. Now, all of this is ahead of a possible ground offensive that is meant to eliminate Hamas after the terror attacks in Israel. Holly Williams, as you know, is in East Jerusalem. She is covering all angles of this story. Holly, good morning to you.

HOLLY WILLIAMS: Good morning, Gayle. The secretary-general of the United Nations is calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. He condemned the massacres carried out by Hamas militants in Israel on October 7, but he also said: “Those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.” More than 700 were killed in the Gaza Strip in just 24 hours according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry. If accurate, the deadliest day in Gaza since this war began. The United Nations says a third of Gaza’s hospitals have stopped functioning, either because they’re damaged or because of a lack of fuel to power their generators. At Al-Nasser Hospital, they’re still open, still saving lives when they can. Many of the injured are very young. “Are they the enemies,” says this man, pointing to his wounded son. “My sister was bleeding,” says this little girl. “My mother was crushed by rocks.” In the neonatal intensive care unit at Al-Shifa Hospital, doctors are also warning of a fuel shortage. With no electricity, they say, many of their tiny patients would die. Eight trucks carrying humanitarian aid made it into Gaza yesterday from Egypt, bringing water, food, and medicine, but no fuel. Without it, the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees says its work will be forced to stop tonight.
Israel claims there is fuel in Gaza, releasing aerial images of these tanks, which it says contain more than 100,000 gallons. “Let Hamas resupply the fuel to hospitals into its poor residents,” said a spokesman for Israel’s military. “The world must demand it from Hamas.” The U.S. says it is pushing for fuel to get into the Gaza Strip, but it says it also understands Israel’s concern that Hamas could take that fuel and use it for its own purpose, Nate.

NATE BURLESON: Holly Williams in East Jerusalem, thank you.

(....)

8:00:33 a.m. [TEASE]
8 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Israel-Hamas War]

KING: [W]e’ve got the latest from Israel and Gaza. The U.S. head of Doctors Without Borders will tell us what needs to happen to help those under siege.

(....)

8:01:08 a.m.
26 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Calls for Ceasefire]

KING: The Secretary General of the United Nations calls for a humanitarian ceasefire on war-torn Gaza.

WILLIAMS: He condemned the massacres carried out by Hamas militants, but he also said, “Those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.”

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: More Gaza Strikes]

BURLESON: Hamas officials report more than 700 people killed in Gaza in just 24 hours as we wait a potential ground invasion.

(....)

8:02:50 a.m.
7 minutes and 28 seconds

BURLESON: But we begin how we have begun all week long, and that is the growing international concern over the barrage of missiles and bombs raining down on Gaza. The Israeli military says it is launching hundreds of strikes a day targeting terrorists. But Hamas officials in Gaza say civilians are being killed in large numbers, and that yesterday was the deadliest yet for
people inside the territory. All this has Israel defending its response to the October 7 Hamas attacks of terror. Holly Williams is in East Jerusalem for us. Holly, good morning.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Israel-Hamas War; UN Calls for Ceasefire; Israel Launches 400+ Attacks in Gaza, Hospitals Overwhelmed]

KING: It’s trickling into Gaza.

WILLIAMS: Good morning, Nate. The Secretary General of the United Nations is calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. Now, he’s condemned the massacres carried out by Hamas militants in Israel on October 7, but he also says, “those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.” More than 700 were killed in the Gaza Strip in just 24 hours, according to the Hamas-run Ministry of Health. If accurate, that’s the deadliest day in Gaza since this war began. The United Nations says a third of Gaza’s hospitals have stopped functioning, either because they’re damaged or because of a lack of fuel to power their generators. In the neonatal intensive care unit at Al-Shifa Hospital, doctors are warning that with no electricity, many of their tiny patients would die. Now, Israel claims there is fuel in Gaza, releasing aerial images of tanks, which it says contain more than 100,000 gallons. A spokesman for Israel’s military says that Hamas, which governs the Gaza Strip, should resupply fuel to hospitals and Gaza’s desperately poor people, Gayle.

KING: You’re getting that on the air? We’re going to get out of that story because clearly you could hear the double talk. Thank you very much, Holly Williams, reporting from Jerusalem. Humanitarian aid is trickling into Gaza from Egypt, but it’s not nearly enough, according to our next guest. She is Avril Benoit, the executive director of Doctors Without Borders in the U.S. The organization has doctors and nurses working in hospitals in Gaza right now. They say those hospitals are overwhelmed as they deal with shortages of medicine, food, water and fuel. It is not a good situation. Avril Benoit, we’re happy to say, joins us at the table. Welcome to you, Avril.

DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AVRIL BENOIT: Thanks for having me.

KING: Can you please paint a picture, I know you’re in touch with your people, about the conditions they’re working on, what are they doing and how are they doing it?

BENOIT: It’s even difficult to stay in touch with them because of the lack of electricity, to recharge your phone, the cell systems, cell towers are down. Sometimes it’s difficult to get the information, but what we do receive is that the hospitals are overwhelmed. There are not only people going to hospitals when they’re not injured because they’re looking for some place of safety where they think there will not be any destruction, airstrikes, even though there have been, the World Health Organization reported about a dozen hospitals have completely shut down already, but there’s also inside the hospital an overwhelming number of patients. Many of them are young patients where the parents are desperate, they’re not going to stay at home and try to treat it themselves. They really take the severe cases to the hospital. The operating rooms are so full that at times our surgeons are having to perform surgery on the floor of a hallway with all the
KING: What kind of surgeries? Like what?

BENOIT: Well, one example from yesterday that we heard, it was a young boy, nine years old, who had a partially severed foot that needed to be amputated in order to save it, his limb. There was no anesthesia. The anesthetist could do little than give him a sedative, a mild sedative. They’ve got him on the floor and they are trying to keep the child calm while performing the surgery with the family all around.

KING: Avril, how do you perform surgery with no anesthesia? It reminds me of that movie "Marathon Man" where they ripped out the guy’s teeth. You could just hear the blood curdling screams of the pain. How do the doctors do that? What do they do?

BENOIT: Yeah, the shortage, I mean, they have to tolerate it and do the best they can to save lives. The lack of painkillers was something that we noticed right at the very beginning of all of this with the shortages of medical stocks in the hospitals. The surgeons are also lacking equipment. And so all in all, we can see that the hospitals one by one are closing because they just can’t function. The whole other layer to this is that they don’t have electricity on a sustained level. The lack of fuel to run the generators, to keep all the machinery going, to keep the lights on is really in short supply. So they’re rationing as best they can. Fewer and fewer hospitals now are able to function.

BURLESON: So low on space, low on medicine, equipment, actual doctors and nurses, fuel. What happens if they run out of fuel completely?

BENOIT: One by one, the hospitals are shutting down because of this. And it’s a lack of fuel. There’s also a lack of water for people. So people are going to be coming in increasingly getting sick. They’re drinking water from the Mediterranean. It’s salty. It’s brackish. It’s unhygienic. It’s not drinkable and so for the infection control also, we worry that all these conditions put together and the people who are not able to access a safe place to deliver a baby, to have their cancer treatment, their dialysis treatment, all these things is going to kill people in addition to the risks that the hospitals are facing and the ambulances of airstrikes happening at any time.

JERICKA DUNCAN: What’s the long-term plan as you all look to make sure your people stay safe in terms of getting them out if it comes to that? And what can people do to help?

BENOIT: The long-term plan is really to just mobilize and get ready. So around the region, we have teams ready to rotate in if we can get some of the staff out. We have international staff there from 16 different nations with passports waiting at the Rafah area with UN and other aid workers waiting for that opportunity to rotate out. Meanwhile, our Palestinian staff have no way of leaving. No one has left since this all began, this particular siege. No one has been able to leave. And the trickle of aid trucks carrying supplies has been just barely anything, really, when you think of the scale of it, so the plan is to be able to make the preparations to have more substantial humanitarian aid come in when we get the green light. But right now, there is no safe place in
Gaza, and we don’t have that possibility to increase the humanitarian aid at this time.

KING: You people seem so brave to me, Avril. I’m wondering what they tell you. I think it’s a dumb question to say, are they afraid? I would imagine they are. What are you hearing about that? What are they telling you?

BENOIT: Well, some of our colleagues were not able to flee from the Northern Gaza area where there had been this request by the Israeli defense forces for everyone to move. And they are listening to bombardments all night. They’re there with their families. They are afraid. And they’re in these overcrowded places sometimes with many other families. And then they show up to work not knowing if they’ll ever see their family members again and so the risks all around to everyone, I mean, the sense of tension and fatigue, exhaustion, dehydration, you name it, people are suffering right now.

KING: And they’re so needed, too, in the middle of all this. Thank you very much, Arvold Benoit, for painting the picture, a very graphic picture for us. Thank you.