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READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

Friday, September 26

Lasers over Eilat, jets over Sana'a, and a UN microphone at 9 a.m.: Israel fights on every front before Shabbat.

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CLASSIFICATION

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ISRAEL hit the Houthis hard in Sana'a after a drone tore into Eilat's tourist strip, and the Air Force rolled out *Keren Or* laser defense in the south. In Gaza City, around 700,000 civilians have moved out as the IDF squeezes Hamas's hold. Washington and Europe are busy too: Trump says annexation is off the table, donors scramble to prop up the PA, and Iran keeps testing the boundaries—from satellite-scorched launch pads to missile factories for its proxies.

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Two things to watch closely today. First, **Netanyahu's UN speech at 9 a.m. Eastern**. It will set the tone for the next diplomatic round while Israel is striking 2,200 kilometers from home. Second, **Eilat's vulnerability**. The city's civil defense and hospital capacity lag the threat; the new laser is welcome, but the home front needs hardened basics, now.

The War Today

Operation Moving Package: Israel strikes key Houthi military sites in Yemen

Israel launched its largest air campaign in Yemen to date, striking Houthi command, intelligence, and weapons sites in Sanaa after a drone attack on Eilat wounded more than 20 people. According to *Ynet*, dozens of IAF aircraft carried out the long-range strike, hitting more than 65 targets some 2,200 kilometers from Israel. Houthi sources accused Israel of striking civilian areas, while the IDF insisted the operation targeted military infrastructure as part of ongoing efforts to stop drone and missile launches from Yemen.

Iran built underground missile factories in Yemen

Israel has identified Iranian-backed underground weapons factories in Yemen producing drones and long-range missiles for the Houthis. Intelligence also uncovered Houthi training for a mass infiltration raid modeled on October 7, potentially launched from Jordan and aimed at reaching Jerusalem.

IDF evacuation of Gaza City reaches 700,000 civilians

The IDF says more than 700,000 Palestinians have evacuated Gaza City during the ongoing ground invasion, up sharply from last week, leaving an estimated 300,000 still inside. According to *The Jerusalem Post*, Hamas fighters appear to be fleeing alongside civilians, with only sporadic clashes reported. Israeli forces continue to dismantle Hamas infrastructure, striking over 170 targets and seizing weapons caches, though rocket fire persists at low levels.

Israel to reopen West Bank-Jordan crossing after holiday closure, deadly attack

Israel will reopen the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge to passengers for limited hours Friday, after a Rosh Hashanah closure compounded days of shutdown following a terror attack in which a Jordanian truck driver murdered an IDF soldier and a reservist. The crossing will run 8:00–12:30 local; cargo and Gaza-bound aid remain paused pending the investigation and updated checks. *The Times of Israel* notes Palestinian and Jordanian claims of an “indefinite” closure were overstated, as the terminal typically closes on Jewish holidays.

Inside Israel

‘Eilat is not ready for war’: Residents voice concerns amid Houthi drone strikes

After a Houthi drone wounded at least 20 near Eilat’s Hayam Mall, residents and the mayor warn the Red Sea city lacks basic protection: just 87 public shelters, many inaccessible, and only 65 hospital beds at Yoseftal. Since the war began, roughly 300 drones targeted Eilat and at least 10 breached defenses; officials cite human error in recent failures while promising rapid reinforcement. Tourism remains stubbornly full, but locals fear a mass-casualty event would overwhelm the city’s thin medical and civil defense backbone.

Advisory committee approves candidacy of David Zini for next Shin Bet chief

The Senior Appointments Advisory Committee cleared Maj. Gen. (res.) David Zini to head the Shin Bet, paving the way for a cabinet vote and dismissing conflict-of-interest claims against the prime minister’s nominee. Four former agency chiefs opposed the pick as too extreme, but IDF Chief Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir and Defense Minister Israel Katz voiced support, signaling the security establishment will close ranks as the war continues.

Slapstick Israeli comedy flick offers respite in troubled times

“Saving Shuli San,” the sequel starring comedy trio Ma Kashur, has drawn 1.3 million viewers and climbed to fifth all-time among Israeli films, giving a weary public ninety minutes of relief. The Israeli Academy of Film and Television honored the team for the achievement, as the movie’s goofy escapades sit atop a layer of national pain and stubborn joy. *The Times of Israel* frames it as comic therapy in a hard season.

Israel and the World

Trump after talk with Netanyahu: ‘I will not allow West Bank annexation. Not going to happen’

President Donald Trump declared he will block any Israeli annexation of the West Bank, saying “it’s not going to happen” after speaking with Prime Minister Netanyahu and meeting Turkish President Erdoğan. His stance, delivered on the eve of Netanyahu’s UN speech, comes as France, the UK, Canada, and Australia recognize a Palestinian state.

Donor nations provide emergency financial aid to Palestinian Authority, Norway says

Saudi Arabia, Britain, France, Spain, Japan, and Norway formed an “Emergency Coalition” to stabilize the Palestinian Authority, citing an unprecedented financial crisis. Norway pledged \$4 million, and the group urged Israel to

release withheld funds. The push reflects Europe and Arab states' determination to keep the PA afloat as war strains its finances and legitimacy.

Iran likely carried out undeclared missile test last week, satellite photos indicate

Fresh satellite images show scorch marks at Iran's Imam Khomeini Spaceport consistent with a solid-fuel launch, days after social media captured a contrail over Semnan. An Iranian lawmaker boasted of an ICBM test, though Tehran offered no proof; even so, the timing tracks with Iran rebuilding missile sites hit in June and the push to evade looming UN snapback sanctions. Iran continues to push to extend their range, complicate interception efforts, and keep Europe within threat rings while Israel fights on multiple fronts.

Briefly Noted

- *Israel National News*: Hamas rejected PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas's UN speech, accusing him of siding with the "Zionist narrative" and vowing never to give up its weapons. The group called Abbas's stance a "surrender to external dictates" and insisted only armed "resistance" can defend Palestinian goals.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Netanyahu's office launched "Remember Oct. 7" billboards and trucks across New York, pairing hostage ribbons and QR codes with his UN address to confront leaders and the public with Hamas's massacre.
- *Times of Israel*: Britain's Home Office moved to block a legal challenge to the terror designation of Palestine Action, the vandal group long fixated on Elbit facilities, signaling London's resolve to uphold the ban.
- *Jewish Chronicle*: Microsoft restricted its cloud services to the IDF's Unit 8200 after reports alleging mass surveillance of Palestinians — a move opponents will weaponize in global campaigns against Israel.
- *JNS*: A New York public school teacher argues major U.S. teachers' unions have embraced anti-Israel activism and sideline Jewish members, urging educators to resign under the Janus ruling, document antisemitism, and organize alternatives.
- *Jerusalem Post*: The Gaza-bound Global Sumud Flotilla fractured further as a Tunisian coordinator quit over LGBTQ activists, while others accused "Zionist propaganda" of exploiting the rift.
- *JNS*: A lecturer uncovered that the University of Rochester falsely denied ever having a Students for Justice in Palestine chapter, despite official records proving it existed until being "de-recognized" in 2023.
- *Forward*: Philadelphia's Holocaust Memorial Plaza unveiled a new mural, *Lay-Lah Lay-Lah*, weaving memory and displacement in 28 languages — from Babylonian cuneiform to Yiddish, including Hannah Szenes' poetry and the *Kaddish*.

Developments to Watch

- **Keren Or laser deployed in Eilat** – The IDF activated its new *Keren Or* laser defense system around Eilat, designed to down Houthi drones. Air Force chief Tomer Bar vowed to “eliminate the Houthi threat at its root.”
- **Iran pressures Houthis on shipping** – Israeli intelligence says Tehran is urging the Houthis to expand attacks on global shipping in the Bab al-Mandeb strait, threatening both Red Sea trade and Suez Canal traffic. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Iranian agent arrested in Israel** – Authorities detained Yaakov Perl, a dual U.S.-Israeli citizen, for operating under Iranian orders. He allegedly gathered intelligence, photographed sensitive sites, and attempted to recruit others for Tehran’s networks.
- **U.S. summons global generals** – Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered every U.S. general and admiral ranked brigadier or higher to meet at Quantico next week. All 11 combatant commands will be represented. Analysts warn Washington may be preparing for global war footing. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **China quietly arming Iran** – Former Mossad counterintelligence chief Oded Eilat warns Beijing is supplying Tehran with HQ-9B air defenses and helping restart missile production. He calls it a “geopolitical danger” beyond the Iran–Russia axis.
- **French warning over consulate closure** – Ambassador Frédéric Journès told Israel that shutting France’s Jerusalem consulate would trigger a “firm” response, adding tension with a government already hostile to European recognition of “Palestine.”
- **Suspicious flood of NGO funding** – Reports allege Rockefeller-linked foundations funneled millions of shekels into Israeli NGOs opposing government policy, including Yesh Din and Breaking the Silence. The claims fuel debate over foreign interference in wartime politics.
- **Lebanon clashes intensify** – Beirut saw street battles between the Lebanese army and Hezbollah supporters, feeding fears of “the black nightmare” of wider war.
- **Spanish arms deal scrapped** – Spain canceled a €200m weapons sale to Israel, its third such move this month, even as NATO allies scramble for arms against Russia.

Bottom line:

ISRAEL is forcing choices. The IAF is raising the price for Houthi aggression, the army is dismantling Hamas’s urban trap in Gaza City, and Jerusalem is

signaling it won't be dragged into diplomatic theatrics that leave Jews less safe. Iran remains the through-line: missiles, proxies, and pressure at sea.

Watch next:

- Houthi retaliation patterns and Red Sea shipping.
- The pace of IDF advances inside Gaza City.
- Whether Europe's recognition gambit hardens into sanctions—or fizzles after New York.

Shabbat Shalom—may it come with quiet borders and a measure of sweetness.

— *Uri Zehavi* · Intelligence Editor With *Modi Zehavi* · Data + Research Analyst

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ABOUT MITZPE INSTITUTE

Mitzpe Institute is an intelligence and strategy organization focused on Israeli security, diaspora threat assessment, and the strategic challenges confronting the Jewish people and the West. We produce daily intelligence, forensic analyses, strategic assessments, and tactical briefings read by policymakers, military leaders, and institutional decision-makers across more than 90 countries and all 50 US states — from the Knesset and the US Congress to allied governments, major policy institutions, and Jewish organizational leadership worldwide.

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