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READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

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Peace Inked, Doubt Unshaken: Hostages, Missiles, and the Price of Illusions

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AFTER two years of war, Israel and Hamas have signed the first phase of the Trump peace deal. The hostages are set to return, the troops are preparing to pull back, and the world is already writing headlines about “the end of the Gaza war.” But those who’ve lived through Israel’s history know that peace announcements are not peace itself.

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Today's briefing tracks both halves of that story: the fragile optimism in Sharm el-Sheikh and the harder truths rising on every front — Iran lifting missile limits, Houthi drones pressing Eilat, Hezbollah rebuilding under the rubble, and Hamas preparing its next move even as it negotiates. The deal *may* end one war, but it will test whether Israel — and the West — have learned how to hold peace without surrendering vigilance.

A quick personal note: I just published a new book, *Holiday From History: The West's Delusion of Peace and the Return of War*. If you value this work, checking out the book is one of the best ways to support what we do here. Thank you!

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The War Today

Israel and Hamas agree to first phase of Trump peace deal aimed at ending Gaza war

U.S. President Donald Trump announced that Israel and Hamas have signed the first phase of his Gaza peace plan, committing to release all hostages and begin an Israeli troop withdrawal to agreed positions. Mediators from Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey brokered the deal after marathon talks in Sharm el-Sheikh, with 20 hostages expected to be freed in the first stage and five crossings opened for humanitarian aid. Trump called it “a great day for peace,” though Israeli officials warned that Hamas could still renege on the agreement at the last moment.

How will the newly agreed-upon Gaza deal take shape over coming days? – explainer

Israel's cabinet is set to ratify the first stage of the Trump-brokered Gaza ceasefire on Thursday, authorizing a 72-hour countdown for Hamas to release all surviving hostages “in one fell swoop.” The IDF will then withdraw to the so-called “yellow line,” leaving Israel in control of roughly 53% of the Strip, while Trump plans to arrive Sunday and may address the Knesset. The deal also includes the release of 1,700 Gaza detainees and 250 prisoners serving life terms—excluding Hamas's *Nukhba* killers and senior terror commanders—as part of the exchange.

Hamas attempts raid on army post in Gaza City outskirts; IDF says 3 gunmen killed

Five Hamas operatives surfaced from a tunnel near the Netzarim Corridor and moved toward an IDF encampment; Golani scouts, backed by the air force, killed three while two fled back underground. The army reported no Israeli casualties and launched a sweep for the fugitives, even as a separate expert probe was opened into a grenade accident that seriously wounded two reservists in Khan Younis the previous day.

Inside Israel

Facing drought, Israel to direct desalinated water to Sea of Galilee, in world first

In response to a deepening drought and record-low rainfall, Israel will begin channeling desalinated water into the Sea of Galilee this November — the first operation of its kind worldwide. With the lake dropping below its lower red line, only 10% of the usual amount will be drawn into the national water carrier, while six desalination plants and expanded recycling will cover most national demand. Officials warn that the country is entering another “emergency” year for water security, as climate change brings longer dry spells punctuated by destructive floods.

Breakthrough Israeli AI slashes head-CT wait times, flags missed brain bleeds – exclusive

An Assuta Medical Centers study of 5,000+ scans found the Israeli Aidoc platform cut urgent-case backlogs and prevented 1,500+ hours of cumulative delay in 2024, while flagging 21 intracranial hemorrhages missed in initial reports. The AI hit 100% sensitivity for triaging emergencies and ~90% sensitivity/99% specificity for hemorrhage detection, accelerating care in Israel’s scanner-strained system and marking the first large outpatient deployment nationwide.

Man, 33, shot dead in northern city of Shfaram as Arab crime wave continues unabated

A 33-year-old Nazareth resident, Wiam Fakhuri, was shot dead in his truck in Shfaram, marking the 197th murder in Arab society this year. Police suspect a burning car nearby was used in the killing but have made no arrests. The murder follows escalating violence in Arab communities, including a deadly feud in Rahat last week, amid growing criticism that authorities have failed to stem the wave of organized crime.

Israel and the World

Druze dispute delaying Israeli-Syrian deal

Talks on an Israeli-Syrian de-escalation agreement have stalled over Israel’s demand for a humanitarian corridor to aid the embattled Druze community in southern Syria, which Damascus rejects as a sovereignty breach. Tel Aviv University’s Prof. Eyal Zisser told *JNS* that the deal — once near completion — now depends on U.S. mediation, as clashes between Syrian regime forces and Druze militias continue and American attention shifts elsewhere. Israel reportedly continues covert support for 3,000 Druze fighters in the region

while maintaining forward IDF positions beyond the 1974 buffer line to block Hezbollah and jihadist infiltration near the Golan.

Spanish parliament approves Israel arms embargo

Spain's parliament narrowly approved Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's full arms embargo on Israel, halting all weapons trade amid what Madrid calls a response to the Gaza war. The decree bans the sale and purchase of Israeli arms and even the advertising of products linked to Israeli-controlled areas, while Spanish bases have already blocked U.S. arms shipments bound for Israel. Israel's acting ambassador Dana Erlich said Spain's government is "actively contributing to antisemitism."

Serious clashes outside the Israeli embassy in Athens

Thousands of "pro-Palestinian" demonstrators marched through Athens on the second anniversary of Hamas's October 7 massacre, with a faction attacking police outside the Israeli embassy using flares and Molotov cocktails. Riot police responded with tear gas and multiple arrests. Similar anti-Israel rallies took place in London, Paris, Geneva, Istanbul, and Stockholm, underscoring how October 7 has become a rallying date for violent anti-Israel agitation across Europe.

19-hour escape: US, Israel, and Jordan unite to save Navy officer's mother from Gaza

In a rare joint humanitarian operation, Israel, Jordan, and the United States coordinated a 19-hour rescue of 59-year-old Ahlam Firwana, the mother of a U.S. Navy medic, from Gaza. The Washington Post reports that the extraction—overseen by the Trump administration's envoy team and aided by Israeli security officials—required a temporary halt in air operations and \$10,000 in logistics support. Firwana walked the final nine miles to safety before crossing into Jordan, where she now awaits a U.S. visa. The operation underscores both the peril civilians face in Gaza and the extraordinary coordination needed for any safe passage out.

Briefly Noted

- *Times of Israel*: Iran rejected resuming nuclear talks with Europe after Britain, France, and Germany reimposed sanctions under the 2015 deal's snapback clause, while hinting it may end cooperation with the UN atomic watchdog.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Yemen's Houthi regime detained nine more UN staff, bringing the total to 53 held since 2021, accusing them of espionage after Israeli strikes on Houthi officials and defying UN demands for their release.
- *Times of Israel*: France's political crisis deepened as Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu resigned after only 27 days in office, leaving President Emmanuel

Macron isolated and far-right leader Marine Le Pen calling for new elections.

- *Jerusalem Post*: Italy's ruling party advanced a bill to ban Islamic face coverings and tighten oversight of foreign-funded religious groups, joining over twenty countries with similar restrictions aimed at curbing extremism.
- *JNS*: An opinion essay argues that Western governments remain dangerously complacent about the Muslim Brotherhood, a global Islamist network with roots in violent movements like Hamas. The article traces the Brotherhood's record of bloodshed in Algeria and influence in Europe and the U.S., warning that failure to confront its ideology invites long-term civilizational harm.
- *JNS*: In a new episode of *The Meira K Show*, host Meira Kolatch argues that Israel's true victory over Hamas depends on dismantling its financial and ideological networks, not just achieving a hostage release. She frames the Trump-Netanyahu peace framework as a strategic pivot—shifting pressure from Hamas to its state patrons in Qatar and Iran—and calls for confronting Islamism as a global movement rather than a local conflict.
- *CBS News*: An intelligence bulletin warns extremists are using AI tools—including chatbots and deepfakes—to automate antisemitic propaganda, glorify Nazis, and aid violent plots, as U.S. antisemitic incidents reach a 30-year high.
- *Axios*: Over half of American Jews say they've faced antisemitism in the past year, with most now viewing it as a routine part of Jewish life—proof that this hatred long predates the Gaza war and will outlast any ceasefire.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Rabbi Avraham Wein was assaulted outside his Bergenfield, New Jersey synagogue before bystanders stopped the attacker; police increased patrols around Jewish sites as the motive remains under review.
- *Times of Israel*: Russia's FSB says it foiled terror plots to bomb a synagogue and firebomb a Jewish center, accusing suspects linked to a banned Islamist group of planning to use "pro-Palestinian" protests as cover for antisemitic attacks.
- *Times of Israel*: Israel's Interior Ministry moved to freeze support for Arraba after its mayor called Israel a "barbaric enemy" during a memorial event; officials said state funding cannot support incitement.
- *Times of Israel*: Pope Leo XIV announced his first papal visit—to Turkey and Lebanon—highlighting Christian unity and likely touching on regional peace and Lebanon's fraught balance between state and Hezbollah power.
- *JNS*: Hundreds of Kenyan Christians marched through Nairobi marking the October 7 anniversary in solidarity with Israel, invoking biblical covenant and calling on Kenya's government to deepen ties with Jerusalem.
- *Times of Israel*: Archaeologists uncovered three Iron Age shipwrecks off Israel's northern coast, offering rare evidence of biblical-era trade under the Kingdom of Israel and challenging the long-held assumption that commerce declined during that period.

Developments to Watch

- **Houthi drones toward Eilat** – IAF jets downed multiple suicide UAVs launched from Yemen near Israel's border with Egypt; Houthis brag they can send “waves” every few hours, aiming to sap Eilat's tourism and port traffic.
- **Iran lifts missile limits** – A senior Iranian lawmaker said Khamenei removed all range caps on Tehran's missiles, matching Israeli warnings that the Islamic Republic is expanding strike options even as Gaza talks advance. – **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Hezbollah rebuilds, IDF strikes** – The IAF killed a Hezbollah operative restoring air defenses near Zibqin and hit Radwan training camps in the Bekaa and targets around Hermel, keeping pressure on the north while negotiations proceed.
- **Gaza long-range rockets readied** – Troops found and neutralized launch-prepared rockets aimed at Israel's center, alongside a cache of explosives, comms gear, and rifles, underscoring why the *tzavah* (army) says Gaza City remains an active combat zone.
- **‘Deep-architecture’ Hamas tunnel** – Engineers blew a tunnel near the European Hospital that was three times deeper than typical shafts, with re-designed galleries and rooms—evidence Hamas adapted its network after months of IDF mapping.
- **Iranian arms to Judea and Samaria** – Israel seized a “balance-breaking” shipment including anti-tank rockets headed to terror cells in Judea and Samaria, another Tehran attempt to ignite a wider front. – **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Blue-on-blue grenade accident** – A grenade detonated inside a room at an IDF post in Khan Yunis, seriously wounding two reservists; commanders opened a special inquiry and issued updated force-protection guidance.
- **Off-duty soldier killed at home** – A police round fatally struck an IDF soldier on leave in Kiryat Arba during a disputed incident; the shooting is under investigation and families are being supported by *hesed* (communal care).
- **Ashkelon–Sderot rail reopens** – After security upgrades and a favorable assessment, protective railcars were removed and service restored, a needed boost to the western Negev's recovery and daily *shmirah* (guardianship) of normal life.
- **Smuggling at Kerem Shalom** – Customs stopped a dirt truck hiding cigarettes, batteries, and comms kits bound for Gaza; Israel is poised to allow ~400 aid trucks daily under the ceasefire, heightening the risk of diversion and black-market control.
- **Another Flotilla attempt foiled** – Navy impounded nine boats trying to breach the lawful blockade; Ankara called it “piracy” as deportations proceed.

- **ICC lawfare against Italy** – A complaint to the ICC targets PM Meloni and ministers for “complicity in genocide” over arms exports to Israel, signaling escalated legal pressure on allies.
- **Kurdish solidarity in Qamishli** – Demonstrators waved Israeli flags alongside SDF banners after clashes with Assad’s forces, a rare public nod to shared enemies and interests.

THE deal, if implemented, will bring Israelis home. That matters most and adds much joy. But the week’s signals — Iranian range expansion, fresh Gaza rockets prepped for launch, and lawfare in European capitals — say the wider campaign isn’t done.

Watch three things:

1. Whether Hamas uses the pause to harden rule or finally loses its grip.
2. How Tehran probes with missiles and proxies while the world watches ceremonies.
3. Whether allies who celebrate the release also back Israel’s right to finish dismantling terror.

The story of this ceasefire will not be written in Cairo, but in what happens next.

— *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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