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READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

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Deadlines Expire, Patience Evaporates — Hamas stalls, Hezbollah rebuilds, and the ceasefire frays by habit.

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THE BOTTOM LINE The cultural battlefield has nearly overtaken the military one. What once hid behind euphemism — “decolonization,” “resistance,” “anti-Zionism” — now proudly mimics terrorism, not protests it. Western schools, media, and NGOs have become transmission belts for jihadist ideology, sanitized by progressive rhetoric and shielded by institutional cowardice. The pattern is global: elite classrooms imitate hostage videos; European banks freeze Jewish accounts; UK streets echo fascist chants once heard in Berlin. The West is replaying its own 1930s — only this time, the blackshirts wear keffiyehs and the useful idiots grade their essays.

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THE quiet is once again theoretical. Hamas has spent the ceasefire faking compliance and digging deeper; Israel has spent it preparing for round two. The staged handover of a murdered hostage's body — already buried once — crossed from cynicism into psychological warfare. It reminded Israelis what “negotiation” means to terrorists and pushed Washington's truce diplomacy closer to collapse.

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North of the border, Hezbollah is testing limits under French and American supervision. Israel's airstrikes in the Beqaa Valley and the revelation that France ordered UNIFIL to shoot down an Israeli drone stripped away the last pretense of neutrality. At the same time, Iran has gone public with a new radar array in Sudan, wiring its surveillance net from Yemen to the Red Sea. It now watches Eilat with the same precision it watches Haifa.

Inside Israel, patience is as thin as the calm. Lapid and Liberman are turning the draft fight into a constitutional weapon; Smotrich is turning annexation into a campaign slogan. The same coalition that promises sovereignty abroad is losing coherence at home. The IDF is still eliminating cells in Jenin; the High Court is still deciding whether the law applies equally. Both are fighting insurgencies — one armed, one legal.

Every front moves, even when it pretends not to. The war's shape is now familiar: Hamas fakes restraint, Hezbollah rebuilds under a flag of diplomacy, and Iran measures Israel's hesitation in minutes.

The War Today

Ceasefire Under Strain: Israel Rearms, Allies Hesitate, and Hamas Digs In

Israel has made tunnel demolition the central mission of its forces still operating inside Gaza's "yellow zone," with Defense Minister Israel Katz ordering the IDF to prioritize destroying Hamas's vast subterranean network—an infrastructure he says remains 60% intact two years after the October 7 pogrom. While Katz's directive aligns with U.S.-brokered truce terms, Washington's involvement has deepened operational oversight, and legal constraints still hamper action beneath Gaza's civilian grid. At the same time, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said that the IDF is preparing for a "renewed occupation of Gaza" and "very violent, forceful" strikes if Hamas continues to stall on returning the 13 remaining bodies of Israeli hostages—violations that the Hostages and Missing Families Forum says should freeze the next phase of the Trump peace deal. Trump's 48-hour ultimatum for compliance still looms, as U.S. officials coordinate closely from southern Israel. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council and Arab partners remain deadlocked over the mandate for the planned multinational force: Arab states want a passive peacekeeping presence, while Washington insists it must enforce Hamas disarmament. Jordan's King Abdullah and Senator Lindsey Graham both warned that the concept of "peace enforcement" is untenable—Abdullah saying no Arab state will "run around Gaza on patrol," Graham calling the plan "unrealistic" and warning that "every day Hamas grows stronger." Trump's allies counter that Hamas's refusal to disarm could trigger an Israeli return to full-scale combat.

ASSESSMENT

The ceasefire is unraveling in slow motion. Israel is treating the lull as a tactical reset, not a peace. Smotrich's vow of renewed occupation, Katz's tunnel campaign, and the IDF's refusal to fully disengage all point to a preparatory posture for resumed war once (inevitably) diplomatic cover frays. The Arab bloc's reluctance to enforce demilitarization leaves Washington's plan hollow, turning its promised "international force" into a symbolic cordon with no mandate to fight—and underscores the reality of what Israel faces from the Arab world: isolation and tolerance only as far as they need to wait to change the map. For Hamas, delay is strategy: time to repair tunnels, reassert control, and claim survival. The next rupture will hinge on whether Jerusalem acts preemptively or waits for Hamas to hand it the justification. Either way, the Gaza file is shifting from management to inevitability—the fight to finish what the truce only paused.

Hamas Exploits the Dead: Staged Recoveries and Ceasefire Blackmail

Hamas violated the U.S.-brokered ceasefire again this week by staging the recovery of slain Israeli hostages' bodies, including that of Ofir Tzarfati, whose remains had already been buried in Israel. IDF drone footage reportedly shows terrorists exhuming and re-burying the corpse in Gaza City's Daraj-Tuffah neighborhood, then summoning Red Cross teams to stage a fake "discovery." The deception, confirmed by IDF reservists and Knesset Member Tzvi Sukkot, was a clear breach of the October 9 truce, which required Hamas to return all bodies. Israeli intelligence believes Hamas knows the exact locations of at least eight of the 13 hostages still held but is deliberately stalling to delay the second phase of the Trump peace plan, which mandates disarmament. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has convened an emergency meeting to weigh five response options—from targeted strikes and expanded control inside Gaza to canceling the ceasefire outright. Defense Minister Israel Katz and Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir are reportedly pressing for a harder line, while Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich urged re-arrest of released terrorists in Judea and Samaria. Meanwhile, Israeli researchers have classified the psychological toll on hostage families as a new trauma type — "Dynamic-Static Ambiguous Loss" — underscoring how Hamas's hostage warfare inflicts harm far beyond the battlefield.

ASSESSMENT

Hamas is using the dead as weapons. The staged burial was inhuman desecration and propaganda — a ghoulis bid to project compliance while mocking the ceasefire's enforcers. The group's behavior confirms Israel's core assessment: Hamas has no intention of disarming or honoring agreements; it is leveraging bodies for legitimacy and leverage. Each delay corrodes the rapidly evaporating trust in the Trump-brokered framework, emboldens Hamas to re-entrench and re-arm, and deepens public fury within Israel. The psychological war — grief, humiliation, and spectacle — is as deliberate as any rocket barrage. The next phase will not be diplomacy but exposure: Israel will likely release the drone footage, rally allies to condemn the deceit, and prepare for the only language Hamas respects — force.

Northern Front: Precision Strikes and Diplomatic Pressure on Hezbollah

Israel intensified strikes across southern and eastern Lebanon, including the Beqaa Valley, killing more than a dozen Hezbollah operatives, as U.S. Deputy Special Envoy Morgan Ortagus arrived in Beirut to demand progress on disarmament and implementation of the 2024 ceasefire. The Israel Air Force targeted a senior weapons dealer, Ali al-Musawi, while French UNIFIL peacekeepers shot down an Israeli surveillance drone they claimed was flying “aggressively” near Kafr Kila—an incident Israel called a misunderstanding. Ortagus met Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and will join a Wednesday session reviewing efforts to clear Hezbollah arms caches, warning that failure to act could invite renewed Israeli escalation. Meanwhile, Defense Minister Israel Katz vowed continued operations “as needed” to secure Israel’s northern communities, and Hezbollah’s leadership responded with defiance, claiming it would not disarm or “let the Israelis pass.” Washington’s second envoy, Tom Barrack, is expected in Beirut in early November, signaling sustained U.S. involvement as part of a broader ceasefire supervision initiative.

ASSESSMENT

The northern theater is heating beneath the diplomatic surface. Ortagus’s mission represents the U.S. attempt to convert leverage into disarmament before Israel loses patience. But Hezbollah reads restraint as weakness and is already rebuilding infrastructure under the ceasefire’s cover. With about 365 Israeli strikes since 2024, the so-called truce is now a managed war—contained but continuous. The drone shootdown and Beqaa operations mark escalation thresholds: the first tests of whether Washington’s diplomacy can restrain Israel’s operational tempo without emboldening the enemy. Lebanon’s government is barely a spectator; real control lies with the armed faction the U.S. now expects it to disarm. That contradiction defines the next crisis.

Inside Israel

Draft, Votes, and the Bench: Israel’s Conscription Fight Goes Fully Political

Opposition leader Yair Lapid threatened to revoke voting rights for ultra-Orthodox Israelis who refuse to enlist, a hardline bid to counter the coalition’s exemption law as Avigdor Liberman cheered and Benny Gantz warned the idea is illegal. Simultaneously, Haredi parties are mobilizing a mass “prayer rally” (i.e., protest) in Jerusalem against arrests of draft evaders, while the High Court convenes a crucial hearing on the state’s failure to issue and enforce conscription orders amid wartime manpower strain. Inside the legal apparatus, a governance gap widened as former Supreme Court president Asher Grunis’s term heading the public AG hiring/firing committee ended, creating a vacuum just as the government seeks to reshape the Attorney General’s role — a move Haredi factions now back in exchange for coalition dividends. The convergence is stark: street pressure, court scrutiny, and structural legal engineering arriving at once over the same question — shared civic duty in a country still at war.

ASSESSMENT

Israel's conscription debate has moved from just policy to power politics. Lapid made service a franchise for the ballot; Haredi leaders made non-service a franchise for the street; the High Court now sits between legality and public order; and the coalition seeks relief by splitting the AG to loosen constraints. A long war cannot rest on selective sacrifice. If the Court orders real enforcement and the Knesset dodges it with legal tinkering, the public backlash will grow and coalition math will bend. The sustainable exit is narrow and known — universal obligation with flexible tracks, proper accommodation for Haredi norms/needs, and real enforcement — but every day of theater raises the cost of getting there.

Coalition at the Crossroads: Pardons, Annexation, and the Coming Political Storm

With elections less than a year away, the Israeli political arena is accelerating toward a full-spectrum confrontation — legal, territorial, and ideological. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has doubled down on his West Bank sovereignty drive, pushing record settlement expansion — over 50,000 new housing units and 25,960 dunams of land declared as state property — while correctly deriding Saudi Arabia's conditions for normalization as “denying Jewish heritage.” At the same time, 55 coalition MKs urged President Isaac Herzog to pardon Jewish nationalist prisoners, including Amiram Ben-Uliel and Ami Popper, arguing moral equivalence after releases of Palestinian terrorists. Herzog has not yet commented, but Justice Minister Yariv Levin reportedly discussed sentence reductions with him. In the background, the Shin Bet announced it foiled over 1,200 terror attacks since October 7, underscoring the enduring threat environment that frames these political gestures.

Meanwhile, the government is rushing to merge Gaza and northern border recovery offices, expanding the Tekuma Directorate's mandate to rebuild both theaters, while southern reconstruction enters its NIS 17.5 billion final phase — even as budget uncertainty looms for 2026. The electorate will have 11 new parties to choose from, including those of Naftali Bennett and Gadi Eisenkot, which are positioning to challenge the coalition amid rising public discontent. But for now, Smotrich's bloc dominates the agenda: cement facts on the ground and test the court's limits.

ASSESSMENT

The ruling coalition is running a calculated pre-election entrenchment strategy — legal, territorial, and symbolic — designed to lock in ideological gains before voters shift the course. The pardon push turns justice into factional currency; the settlement surge turns governance into sovereignty; and the Shin Bet's quiet victories make plain what too many still refuse to admit — Jews are targeted not because of maps or policies but because they exist where jihadists insist they must not. Any normalization deal — Riyadh or elsewhere — is not worth the paper it's printed on if it leaves the country exposed to rhetorical surrender; when Islamist extremists feel emboldened they will test strength again, and their goal is simple and brutal: to drive Jews from the land. As annexation momentum collides with diplomatic optics and public weariness, the real battlefield is legitimacy — who defines it, who enforces it, and who gets to claim the flag of Jewish continuity in a republic running on fumes.

Israel and the World

Aliyah Signal vs. System Friction: Narrative Meets Policy Incentives

Bezalel Smotrich proposed a dramatic tax exemption on Israel-sourced income for new immigrants, aiming to pull human capital and financial capital into Israel as global antisemitism rises, while maintaining the ten-year exemption on overseas income even as reporting relief ends on January 1, 2026. In parallel, an Australian-born IDF veteran and hi-tech professional returned to Melbourne to champion Aliyah as a life mission, underscoring the cultural pull that outpaces spreadsheets. The policy bid would flip today's incentives — bring money in, invest, work, build here — but it collides with prior Tax Authority skepticism, capacity limits in housing and services, and the chokepoints of absorption bureaucracy. The message is clear: tell a compelling story, then fund it and staff it.

ASSESSMENT

The narrative of return has momentum — but it keeps tripping over the state's paperwork. Smotrich's proposed tax exemption for Israel-based income could pull both talent and capital home, but only if the machinery of Aliyah stops grinding its own gears. If the government wants a true Aliyah wave, it must match policy vision with operational competence — fast-tracking credentials, digital intake, and real absorption infrastructure. Until then, even the best incentive reads less like a door open and more like a dare to push through.

Western Optics and Eastern Openings: The Double Standard That Defines “Peace”

Britain closed an \$11 billion Eurofighter sale to Turkey, even as Prime Minister Keir Starmer lectured Israel on “restraint.” The jets — diverted from Qatar and delivered to Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who still praises Hamas and compares Israel to Nazis — mark Europe's largest arms transfer to an Islamist regime in a generation. At the same moment, a WHO official admitted that international agencies pre-decided Israel's guilt in Gaza and debated how to weaponize the word “famine.” In Washington, lawmakers introduced a bipartisan resolution condemning Hamas for executing “Palestinians” who questioned its rule, while in Spain, Banco Sabadell froze Israeli accounts under a royal decree accusing Israel of “genocide.” Meanwhile, in London, Labour MPs applauded speeches branding Zionism a racist ideology — proof that moral inversion now passes for virtue in polite society.

ASSESSMENT

The West has replaced moral clarity with moral choreography. It arms jihadists, sanctions Jews, and claps for antisemites, all while congratulating itself for nuance. The \$11 billion Eurofighter deal shreds the illusion of a principled embargo; the WHO's confession exposes the corruption of "humanitarian" language; and Europe's financial decrees extend lawfare into banking. Each act broadcasts the same message: Jewish defense is provocative, Muslim aggression is contextual. Normalization with such actors is a mirage — paper promises from regimes and elites who, when emboldened, will again turn their weapons and words toward the West once they've eliminated the Jews. The real fight is not for territory but for truth, and right now, the West is selling that, too.

Western Campuses and Classrooms: Indoctrination Masquerading as Education

Across the U.S. and Europe, the mask is slipping on "progressive" spaces that have become incubators of normalized antisemitism and pro-Hamas radicalism. In Virginia, two Fairfax County high school Muslim Student Association chapters released videos reenacting hostage kidnappings to recruit members — a grotesque echo of Hamas tactics. Administrators condemned the clips but delayed discipline, despite pleas from the Jewish Community Relations Council, which called the response "slow and nontransparent." On college campuses, the rot is more overt: at Pomona College, masked activists raided a memorial for October 7 victims, branding survivors "genocidal settlers," while issuing an online manifesto promising to "deal with Zionists accordingly." In London, Israeli professor Michael Ben-Gad remains under threat of beheading by pro-Hamas agitators at City, St. George's University, while "anti-racist" marches in Tower Hamlets devolved into mobs chanting "Zionist scum, off our streets." Simultaneously, German broadcaster ZDF admitted its Gaza contractor killed in an Israeli strike was a Hamas operative, confirming Israel's long-stated warning about terror infiltration of "media."

ASSESSMENT

The cultural battlefield has nearly overtaken the military one. What once hid behind euphemism — "decolonization," "resistance," "anti-Zionism" — now proudly mimics terrorism, not protests it. Western schools, media, and NGOs have become transmission belts for jihadist ideology, sanitized by progressive rhetoric and shielded by institutional cowardice. The pattern is global: elite classrooms imitate hostage videos; European banks freeze Jewish accounts; UK streets echo fascist chants once heard in Berlin. The West is replaying its own 1930s — only this time, the blackshirts wear keffiyehs and the useful idiots grade their essays.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- The IDF unveiled an online archive detailing Hamas's systematic use of civilian infrastructure—including hospitals, mosques, schools, and homes—as command posts, weapons depots, and tunnel hubs throughout Gaza.

- IDF troops captured a Hamas squad infiltrating an IDF-controlled area near Shuja'iyya, who led soldiers to a mosque doubling as a Hamas headquarters packed with explosives and maps of nearby kibbutzim.
- A West Point report warns Hamas has expanded its terror network across Europe, using criminal gangs and weapons caches in Germany, Denmark, and Poland to plot attacks on Jewish and Israeli targets.
- Newly released footage showed Yahya Sinwar, mastermind of the October 7 massacre, hobbling with a cane under IDF fire, filmed just days before his elimination in 2024.
- A French UNIFIL contingent in southern Lebanon shot down an Israeli drone over Kafr Kila under orders from Paris, prompting an IDF protest over the unprecedented hostile act by “peacekeepers.”

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- Panama launched a pro-Israel parliamentary caucus, joining a 63-nation network backing Jerusalem’s sovereignty and Judeo-Christian cooperation across Latin America.
- U.S. attorney Mark Goldfeder published documents proving South Africa approved service of a defamation suit against UN envoy Francesca Albanese, contradicting official denials and exposing Pretoria’s double game on antisemitism.
- The Palestinian Freedom Movement condemned Mahmoud Abbas’s decision to appoint Hussein al-Sheikh as interim successor, calling it a “constitutional coup” by a leader clinging to expired authority.
- Downing Street rebuked police after masked men in London’s Tower Hamlets marched under Islamist slogans shouting “Zionist scum, off our streets,” as Jeremy Corbyn and allies shared the platform at the so-called “anti-racism” rally.

Domestic & Law

- Netanyahu’s lawyers threatened to quit unless his trial schedule is reduced from four hearings a week, arguing national duties make attendance impossible amid war and foreign crises.
- The government’s anti-polygamy task force filed 20 indictments this year after years of neglect, exposing deep links between Bedouin polygamy, child marriage, and domestic violence in the Negev.
- Former PM Naftali Bennett urged the state to dismantle the Education Ministry, arguing its bureaucracy “kills reform” and leaves Israel leading the world in educational inequality.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- The arrival of U.S. troops in Kiryat Gat for Gaza ceasefire monitoring has transformed the city into a bustling local boomtown, with businesses thriving even as residents worry it’s now a “strategic target.”
- Scientists at the Technion developed a mussel-inspired hydrogel that seals internal wounds in seconds—an Israeli innovation with life-saving potential for battlefield medicine and surgery.

Culture, Religion & Society

- The Conference of European Rabbis canceled its Baku summit after credible security threats from Iran-linked networks, relocating the gathering from Azerbaijan.
- Former MK Aliza Lavie reflected on her fight for women's representation in Israeli politics and Orthodox life, linking biblical heroines to modern struggles for Jewish female leadership.

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

- **Airstrike Eliminates Jenin Cell** – IDF and Yamam units killed three terrorists in Kafr Qud, near Jenin, after they emerged from an underground tunnel; a follow-up airstrike on the cave marked Israel's first aerial strike in the area in nine months. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Draft Arrests Spark Haredi Backlash** – Police detained a yeshiva student identified as a draft dodger in Be'er Sheva, igniting anger ahead of Thursday's planned mass Haredi protest in Jerusalem over conscription enforcement. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Hezbollah Commanders Killed** – The IAF struck targets in southern Lebanon, eliminating two Radwan Force operatives, Hassan and Hussin Ibrahim Saliman, as they worked to reestablish infiltration routes into Israel. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **France Ordered UNIFIL Drone Strike** – French authorities were behind UNIFIL's decision to shoot down an Israeli UAV over Kafr Kila, according to *Le Figaro*, raising questions over UN neutrality and coordination with IDF operations. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Hostage Body Misidentified** – The body returned by Hamas overnight is not one of the 13 remaining fallen hostages, per Israeli forensic teams; IDF sources say Hamas is using staged recoveries as propaganda to stall the truce's second phase. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Drone Smuggling Attempt Foiled** – A quadrotor drone carrying rifles and ammunition was intercepted crossing into Israel from Egypt, the latest in a surge of smuggling attempts along the western frontier.
- **Emergency Status Lifted** – Defense Minister Israel Katz ended the "special situation" emergency order in southern Israel for the first time since October 7, signaling a shift toward normalized civilian activity after two years of wartime footing.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **IRGC Radar Deployed in Sudan** – Iran installed a Motlaa al-Fajr radar system on Sudan's Red Sea coast, extending Tehran's surveillance envelope toward Eilat and linking directly with Houthi tracking networks. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **US Joint Chiefs Visit Incoming** – The Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff will visit Israel this weekend amid rising Iranian activity, signaling continued American oversight of ceasefire enforcement and northern deterrence planning.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **PA Still Funding Terrorists** – Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar confirmed the Palestinian Authority continues its “pay-for-slay” program via postal channels despite reforms promised to Washington and Brussels.
- **Coalition Pushes Death Penalty Bill** – In the wake of hostage returns, the Knesset is advancing a death penalty law for convicted mass-murdering terrorists, with committee hearings already underway and cross-party support building. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Home Front & Politics

- **Election Maneuvering Intensifies** – Former Mossad chief Yossi Cohen announced he will not run in 2026, reshaping the centrist field as opposition leaders trade blows over draft laws and coalition stability.
- **Haredi Draft Protests Expand** – With thousands expected to converge on Jerusalem's entrance Thursday, police prepare for full lockdowns around Route 1 and the Chords Bridge, as coalition partners fear renewed street unrest. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

The coming days will decide whether the ceasefire survives as policy or collapses under the weight of its own absurd “logic.” Israel's enemies are gambling that bureaucracy is the new deterrent — that Western coordination will slow Jerusalem's hand. They forget that Israel doesn't lose patience; it reloads it.

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