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READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

Sunday, November 16

Gaza re-arms under a ceasefire nobody believes, Iran wedges open Judea and Samaria, and Washington still tries to build a 'day after' on that never ended.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE Qatar's rocket-cheering spin doctor, the UN official erasing Israeli rape victims, the House "genocide" resolution, the Kentucky professor openly calling wars erasing one country, the Canadian clerk airbrushing "Israel"—all run the same 1975 code: Zionism as racism, Jews as foreign colonizers, Jewish self-defense as crime. Counter-voices—Arab and Palestinian figures acknowledging Jewish indigeneity, Christian outlets committing to factual Judea/Samaria language—are small but strategically precious breaches. Israel must treat this front like others: name and shame Qatari and UN offenders regardless of offense-taking, and protect/amplify rare Arab and Christian truth-tellers.

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Flash Brief

- **Gaza:** Hamas operatives crossed the Yellow Line under a “body search” pretext; IDF killed terrorist infiltrators and demolished tunnel infrastructure east of Rafah.
- **North:** Israeli airstrikes hit Hezbollah weapons sites in Nabatieh and Tyre; Beirut denies the group operates south of the Litani.
- **Judea & Samaria:** IDF killed a terrorist near Nablus and seized dozens of weapons in overnight raids as Iran accelerates arming local cells.
- **Iran/Axis:** IRGC seized a UAE-linked tanker in the Gulf of Oman while pushing missiles and drones into Hezbollah–Syria routes.
- **Diplomacy:** U.S. Gaza plan stalls; Russia and China block the ISF vote; Arab states won’t take the Rafah tunnel gunmen.
- **Homefront:** Haredi draft protests turned violent against a Shas MK; the High Court pushes both sides toward a neutral overseer on Sde Teiman.
- **Information War:** UN rapporteur denies October 7 sexual violence despite her own organization’s findings; Christian media sign covenant backing Israel’s sovereignty and Judea/Samaria terminology.

The War Today

Hamas Regroups as Washington Floats Retreat

Hamas is openly rebuilding its rule across vacated areas under the ceasefire—taxing shipments, fining merchants, silencing opponents, and controlling roads while winter floods swamp civilian tent camps. In the east, IDF units and vetted clan militias operate as the only functioning authority, engaging terrorists who test the Yellow Line demarcation. The IDF demolished a kilometer-long Beit Hanoun tunnel where three soldiers fell previously. The Trump team, unable to recruit states to disarm Hamas, now signals “interim solutions” skipping demilitarization—Israeli officials call this dead on arrival. The U.S. UNSC draft resolution folds in a “path to self-determination,” while Israel’s cabinet mandates the opposite: Gaza demilitarized “to the last tunnel,” no Palestinian state, and no foreign force refusing to use weapons. GOP senators demand UNRWA exclusion from Gaza plans, warning it functions as Hamas with bureaucratic credentials. Netanyahu and Putin held a rare call requested by Moscow—focused on Gaza, hostage exchange, Iran’s nuclear track, and shaping the next phase.

ASSESSMENT

The core contradiction is now transparent: both Russia and the U.S. attempt building Gaza's reconstruction without first dismantling Hamas, while Hamas exploits every delay to rebuild structures enabling October 7. Israel's stance—no reconstruction before disarmament—remains the only reality-grounded position. Any plan inviting foreign troops unwilling to fight, or restoring UNRWA's pipeline, merely rehabilitates a terror army. Disarmament must precede reconstruction under IDF oversight, or Gaza remains unchanged.

Hezbollah Kills Its Critics as Israel Preps Next Strike Cycle

Israel continues coercive strikes from Toul to Nabatieh while preparing sharper Beqaa operations, even as Lebanese leadership absurdly insists Hezbollah “does not operate south of the Litani.” Hezbollah's Unit 121, the organization's execution apparatus, murdered Lebanese Christian politician Elias Hasrouni, staged the corpse as a car crash, and ties to multiple assassinations—journalists, politicians, critics. These killings choke intra-Shiite dissent as Hezbollah rebuilds manpower, reopens Syrian resupply lines, and threatens civil war if Beirut enforces the U.S. disarmament timeline.

ASSESSMENT

Hezbollah simultaneously warns Israel—that it rearmed for the next round—and threatens Beirut with civil war if disarmament proceeds. Israel cannot accept fictions about a militia with assassination squads, missile workshops under apartments, and reopened Syrian corridors being “contained.” The window is brief: either the LAF enforces disarmament within residences, or Israel enforces it from 20,000 feet. Hezbollah understands time; Israel must grasp tempo.

Southern Samaria Heats Up as Iran Pushes the Next Theater

The IDF's recent West Bank sweep killed terrorists, arrested 40+ suspects—bomb-makers, gunmen, Hamas organizers, arms traffickers—and removed rifles and weapons from Silwad through Hebron and northern brigades. This follows a police bust of 100+ starter pistols smuggled via Rome for quick conversion, plus Shin Bet arrests of another Kiryat Yam spy pair feeding sensitive imagery and base locations to Iranian intelligence, with the wife allegedly leveraging reserve-duty access. Combined, this reveals Iran methodically igniting a new Judea and Samaria theater while local Hamas infrastructure, clan networks, and extremist cells attempt turning the Bethlehem–Hebron belt into the next launchpad. Current polling overwhelmingly shows populations cheering Hamas, October 7, and openly backing a solution spanning “the river to the sea” and Jew-free—no mini-state adjacent to Israel, only no Israel.

ASSESSMENT

This dispute concerns whether Jews may live anywhere between the river and the sea while Iran bankrolls enforcement tools. Tehran expands warfare into Judea and Samaria via spies, smuggling, and local franchises; Palestinians there largely don't dream of coexistence but finishing the job starting October 7. Within this environment, "pathways to statehood" aren't peace plans—they're accelerants. The only coherent posture matches current security operations: treat Judea and Samaria as an Iranian-fed combat theater, continuously dismantle cells, choke weapons flows—and counter every foreign "Palestine" sentence with: no rockets, no tunnels, no Iranian hand, no fantasy state.

Inside Israel

Hebron Grows, Haredim Boil, and the Fringe Gets Tagged

MK Tzvi Succot's sovereignty bill places the entire Cave of the Patriarchs under Kiryat Arba's jurisdiction, ending the absurd era when Jews access Isaac's Hall ten days yearly in the city Avraham purchased publicly, in cash, to prevent exactly this. On the ground, the NGO Harchivi Mekom Aholech—"Expand Your Place, I Will Walk"—emulates the patriarch: paying full price for Arab-owned buildings in Hebron, smoothing seller European emigration, and restoring Jewish life to the city center deed by deed. The security system draws new lines: Shin Bet chief David Zini wants electronic ankle monitors on tiny violent fringe elements in Judea and Samaria, a tool more enforceable than restraining orders. Annually, the professional NGO convoy attempts forcing entry into Burin under "solidarity harvest" banners, a ritual manufacturing confrontations: escorting Arab pickers into Jewish agricultural zones, provoking clashes, filming responses, and converting footage into fundraisers. This year the IDF declared groves closed military zones preventing this pattern; activists blocked Shomron Junction 20 minutes anyway for their footage. On the Haredi front, the "we can't serve" crowd demonstrated they fight—against their own MK: Yoav Ben-Tzur was dragged, hit, and had his car window smashed for advancing draft compromise. Hovering above this is a Ynet column noting what ground-walkers already know: farms and new outposts secure vast Area C sections, block PA-EU land grabs, and reduce IDF burden; violent dozens are criminals, not the movement.

ASSESSMENT

Stripping NGO choreography and hashtag morality plays reveals simple patterns. People stabilizing Judea and Samaria graze sheep at 3 a.m., buy Hebron buildings, and convert Israel's sovereignty from rhetoric into ground reality. People destabilizing it import activists staging camera provocations and microscopic Jewish offenders supplying them material. Treat the latter criminally, not symbolically, and block NGOs whose "solidarity" means entering Jewish farmland with hostile pickers to film reactions. On the parallel right-wing flashpoint: Haredi violence against their own MK strengthens core arguments: if willing to physically combat, channel that into IDF uniforms and their kippot. The IDF improved religious observance accommodations; everyone must serve.

A State That Polices Everything Except Itself

The Supreme Court ruled on the Sde Teiman/MAG leak mess, holding that Justice Minister Yariv Levin may appoint external overseer for police investigation—but not the retired judge originally selected. Justices sharply stated the Attorney General and State Attorney are too entangled to supervise, and that in these “exceptional and extreme circumstances,” limited political involvement deviation is justified, provided the chosen jurist is senior, apolitical, criminal-law professional with zero further minister links once appointed. In parallel, the High Court soon hands down separate rulings on investigating former Military Advocate General Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi after Levin and AG Baharav-Miara talks collapsed and the bench floated unprecedented “judge-investigator” ideas keeping both camps at arm’s length.

While courts improvise oversight frameworks, the elected side looks increasingly absent. Six key ministries—including Health, Welfare, Interior, Religious Services, and Labor—currently lack lawful ministers because three-month acting appointment limits expired and coalition infighting blocked permanent replacements. This means no one signing regulations, appointing senior officials, or moving critical legislation like post-war foster-care reforms or October 7 orphan support. Ministry websites still list ousted Haredi ministers unchanged, and aides/chiefs of staff continued showing up until the Civil Service Commission fired dozens.

ASSESSMENT

The same government rightly insisting no Palestinian state and no demilitarized fiction in Gaza somehow accepts leaving health, welfare, and interior policy on autopilot and forcing the High Court inventing ad-hoc mechanisms whenever the justice system touches live issues. The Supreme Court’s Sde Teiman ruling represents rare adult supervision—recognizing both AG and minister camps are conflicted, forcing narrow expert overseers accountable to neither—but law alone cannot compensate for cabinets leaving critical chairs empty. If Israel wants convincing the world—and its citizens—it can run Gaza’s next phase while holding Judea, Samaria, and Hermon lines, it needs ministers throughout critical portfolios and a justice system not jury-rigging weekly workarounds.

Israel and the World

Axis, Accords, and Field Hospitals

Israel’s foreign minister labeled Iran a “pirate state” after the IRGC seized the Marshall Islands-flagged tanker Talara off the UAE coast, another deliberate shot at global shipping lanes as Tehran tries ransoming its way out of sanctions. Simultaneously, Trump told reporters Saudi Arabia “may very shortly” join the Abraham Accords and pushes hard buying dozens F-35s—while Israel quietly insists any sale tie to real normalization and hard security conditions, not another “economic peace” fantasy October 7 buried. Conversely, a 30-strong Israeli medical delegation runs critical care in hurricane-wrecked Jamaica, propping up last functioning hospitals, restarting dialysis,

and literally resuscitating patients in a country offering Israel zero natural political advantage.

ASSESSMENT

Iran uses courts as fig leaves for piracy, threatening world trade; Saudi Arabia waves checkbooks and jets while still flirting with “statehood” language for October 7 cheerers; Israelis who just buried dead fly to Kingston keeping strangers alive. The lesson the war already taught: meaningful alliances build on shared enemies and values, not arms shopping lists or photo-ops. Israel should hammer for IRGC terror designation, tie any Saudi F-35 deal to genuine alignment and zero terror-finance tolerance, and keep investing humanitarian deployments earning quiet, durable friends in places propaganda doesn’t yet control.

Qatar Pays Hamas, the UN Gaslights Rape, and Christians Sign Up for Reality

Qatar’s top Foreign Ministry spokesman, now key “mediator,” spent years praising Hamas rockets, cheering Israeli civilians running to shelters, and promising “Allah’s victory” over Israel—all while Doha kept Hamas payrolled before and after October 7. In Washington, 21 House progressives filed Code Pink-backed genocide resolution accusing Israel, demanding arms embargoes, sanctions, ICC cooperation, and full UNRWA funding, leaning on NGO “experts” whose genocide definition required rewriting to plausibly—though not really—fit their propagandist charges. A Kentucky tenured law professor sued his university investigating his public eliminationist call for global war “ending Israel,” insisting such explicitly eliminationist anti-Zionism is protected speech.

At the UN, 50-year-old software still functions as designed. A Geneva event marking 50 years since “Zionism = racism” outlined how Resolution 3379 became the modern Jew-hatred Rosetta Stone—fusing antisemitism to anti-Zionism and giving institutions templates singularizing Israel while claiming racism-fighting. That system fields a special rapporteur on violence against women flatly declaring “no independent investigation” found October 7 rape, contradicting her own organization’s reports and months of forensic evidence on Hamas sexual tortures and mutilations. In Canada, “Palestine” recognition morphs into bureaucratic erasure: a Canadian-Israeli born in Kfar Saba couldn’t list “Israel” as birthplace, with some Israeli cities recoded as “Palestine” on passports—without legal basis.

Against that tide appear anchor points. Palestinian commentator Ahmed al-Khalidi calls it “the gaslight of the century” branding Mizrahi Jews—expelled from Iraq, Yemen, Morocco, Egypt—as European settler-colonialists, reminding his side their story is Middle Eastern too. In Jerusalem, 100+ Christian media leaders signed ethics covenants pledging describing Judea and Samaria as legally disputed rather than “occupied,” affirming Jewish Land of Israel bonds, and backing Israeli security control in Gaza and the Golan.

ASSESSMENT

Qatar's rocket-cheering spin doctor, the UN official erasing Israeli rape victims, the House "genocide" resolution, the Kentucky professor openly calling wars erasing one country, the Canadian clerk airbrushing "Israel"—all run the same 1975 code: Zionism as racism, Jews as foreign colonizers, Jewish self-defense as crime. Counter-voices—Arab and Palestinian figures acknowledging Jewish indigeneity, Christian outlets committing to factual Judea/Samaria language—are small but strategically precious breaches. Israel must treat this front like others: name and shame Qatari and UN offenders regardless of offense-taking, and protect/amplify rare Arab and Christian truth-tellers.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- **Israel National News:** A woman was injured in Damascus's upscale Mazzeh neighborhood after an explosion hit a three-story building; Syrian media admit ignorance regarding responsibility. Mazzeh is a crowded target deck among IRGC sites, militias, and regime cronies; every "mysterious blast" there reminds that the Syrian front remains alive, even unclaimed.
- **Jerusalem Post:** A blast at an Indian-controlled Kashmir police station killed at least nine and wounded 29 when confiscated explosives detonated as forensic teams examined them, days after a terror car bomb in New Delhi.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- **Ynet:** A chartered flight dumped 150+ Gazans with shaky paperwork onto Johannesburg's tarmac, triggering South African probes and dueling narratives about whether a shady group called Al-Majd—allegedly Israeli-linked—"misled" passengers.
- **Jerusalem Post:** Britain's Labour government unveiled a Denmark-style asylum overhaul stripping housing and stipends from some asylum seekers, limiting support to those "contributing," and tightening removal rules.
- **Times of Israel:** Chile heads into elections dominated by crime and migration, with a Pinochet-nostalgic far-right candidate—a Nazi officer's son—well-placed winning December runoffs on Trump-style deportation vows.

Domestic & Law

- **Jewish Insider:** The Brandeis Center convened 60+ lawyers and Jewish legal orgs in Manhattan coordinating antisemitism case strategies from K-12 to campuses, unions, and employment.

Culture, Religion & Society

- **Jewish Chronicle:** UCL banned a former UNRWA staffer after delivering campus lectures repeating classic blood libels, claiming Jews used Christian blood in ritual bread and "controlled" banking and Israel narratives.

When London universities host 13th-century hate speech dressed as “Zionism 101,” it signals how far anti-Israel activism descended into open Jew-hatred.

- **Times of Israel:** An Iranian-descended Israeli launches a Nowruz-branded Iranian film festival in Sderot, live-streamed enabling ordinary Iranians watching Israelis celebrating Persian culture a year after shooting wars with Tehran.
- **Jewish Telegraphic Agency:** Brooklyn’s Shalom Japan snagged “Shark Tank” deals scaling matzah-ball ramen into food trucks and retail, potentially converting Jewish-Japanese fusion into national comfort food.
- **Jewish Journal:** David Suissa calls out Tucker Carlson’s “Israel First” slur and makes points almost nobody on TV articulates: Israel provides the U.S. intelligence, tech, R&D, and deterrent value fitting perfectly with “America First” doctrine. Within media ecosystems mainstreaming far-right dual-loyalty tropes, spelling why Israel is assets, not liabilities, isn’t truly optional.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

Lebanese Denial Hardens as Rockets Hit Damascus — Rockets struck Damascus’s Mazzeh district and nearby villas, with Syrian authorities scrambling framing blasts as “unknown actors” while Beirut insists Hezbollah has no armed south-Litani infrastructure. The denial wall cracks: every strike exposing Iranian or Hezbollah activity tightens Beirut’s 60-day noose. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Gaza & Southern Theater

Turkey Hints Troop Deployment for Gaza — Ankara stated it is “prepared to take action” in Gaza, including deploying soldiers, clearly aimed at Washington’s ISF debate. Turkish Gaza boots would represent strategic red lines—Israel views Turkey as the most destabilizing regional actor following Iran. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Yellow Line Probes Continue Under Cover of “Body Search” — Hamas and Red Cross teams again comb Zeitoun for a murdered hostage’s body; multiple “search” missions doubled as smuggling runs. Every humanitarian pretext Hamas exploits erodes the ceasefire’s last credibility and justifies sharper IDF engagement rules. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Rain Turns Tent Cities Into Flashpoints — Flooding across Gaza tent camps creates mass displacement within ongoing displacement, with civilian misery rising as Hamas tightens taxation and propaganda. Humanitarian chaos is leverage Hamas weaponizes—expect new pressure campaigns, staged crises, and “aid obstruction” narratives. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

IRGC Piracy Expands Gulf Risk Window — Iran's Talara seizure off the UAE coast confirms state-run hostage-taking patterns for nuclear and sanctions leverage. Expect more maritime disruption as Tehran prices its diplomatic isolation exit. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Houthis Shift From Launches to Internal Purges — Yemen's militia paused attacks "while Gaza rests" but intensified internal show trials and propaganda. The pause is strategic, not moral—their next launch window opens the moment Rafah heats up. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Judea & Samaria

Small Cell in Nablus Tests the Perimeter — IDF reserve forces in the Samaria Brigade killed a terrorist throwing explosives toward troops during overnight arrest raids. Local cells probe IDF tempo while Iran pushes converting the Bethlehem–Hebron belt into the next front. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Starter-Pistol Smuggling Signals a New Supply Line — Police intercepted 100+ convertible pistols smuggled via Rome in traveler's luggage. Starter pistols became cheap, low-profile next-attack-wave weapons—another sign of Iran-backed procurement adapting under pressure. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Diplomatic & Legal

UN Force Plans Stalled in a Veto Loop — Russia, China, and now key Arab states blocked the U.S. Gaza stabilization force proposal—each demanding UNSC mandates they themselves won't allow. The loop means months drifting: only the IDF remains capable enforcing demilitarization. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Home Front & Politics

Haredi Draft Violence Signals Internal Fracture — A Shas MK was attacked by Haredi protesters furious over draft-law compromises their own parties negotiated. If the street can turn on rabbis this fast, the coalition's draft timetable and stability risk escalation. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Conclusion

FIRST, Gaza is no longer single theater: it is two. Hamas governs misery and theft in the west, while Israel and local clans enforce order in the east. Any "international force" entering that split without disarmament merely becomes Hamas 2.0 bodyguard.

Second, Lebanon hit the no-return point: Beirut denial and Hezbollah defiance leave Israel only one workable tool—coercive air enforcement until someone south of the Litani remembers sovereignty costs.

Third, Iran's most promising arena isn't Gaza but Judea and Samaria, where every seized weapon proves the next offensive won't originate at border fences but junctions outside Hebron.

Coming days signal whether Beirut or Washington prepare enforcing their own words. If not, Israel enforces reality alone.

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