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READER EDITION

November 24, 2025

ISRAEL BRIEF

Monday, November 24

Hezbollah's war cabinet just lost its brain in Dahieh, Hamas is starving underground in Rafah, and inside Israel the fight over who tells the truth about October 7 is finally out in the open.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE Israel isn't just fighting terrorists—it's fighting their information supply chain. Qatar finances the universities that radicalize Western students, the media properties that launder propaganda, and the online networks that pose as American populists or Gazan civilians. X's transparency tool confirmed what analysts suspected for years: the anti-Israel discourse online is heavily astroturfed by foreign actors seeking to poison US-Israel relations. Israel must treat information warfare as a national security theater—not a PR problem—and push allies to confront Qatar's influence machine with the same seriousness they apply to other cyber threats.

CLASSIFICATION

Reader Edition

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THE war has clearly changed phase, even if the paperwork hasn't caught up. In the north, Israel killed Hezbollah's chief of staff in the heart of Beirut and then parked drones over his funeral while the IDF quietly moves to high alert. In Gaza, "ceasefire" means hungry Hamas fighters trying to claw out of Rafah tunnels into instant airstrikes, while new local militias stand in the yellow zone yelling "Death to Hamas." At home, Eyal Zamir is actually punishing generals for October 7 and Israel Katz slams the brakes on appointments to re-open the whole probe, and Haredi soldiers in the Hashmonaim Brigade are quietly rewriting the draft debate by example. Around all of this, Iran is shopping nuclear laser tech in Russia, the Houthis are shooting "spies," Trump is about to brand the Muslim Brotherhood what it is, and Qatar is still buying the narrative battlefield.

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Flash Brief

Lebanon: IDF eliminated Hezbollah chief of staff Haytham Ali Tabataba'i in Dahieh, reinforced air defenses and ran surprise drills as Hezbollah weighs whether to respond from the border, Syria, Houthis or abroad. See The War Today & Developments to Watch.

Gaza: Three more terrorists crossed the Yellow Line near Khan Yunis and were killed, Rafah tunnel remnants are trapped and starving, and five anti-Hamas militias now operate from IDF-held zones, including a new "Death to Hamas" outfit in eastern Khan Yunis. See The War Today.

Judea & Samaria: A multi-brigade sweep arrested over 60 suspects, shut two weapons factories and eliminated a PA police gunman, as Central Command openly prepares a larger village operation against Iranian- and Hamas- fed infrastructure. Additionally, Central Command approves ten new jurisdiction areas in Samaria and the Jordan Valley. See The War Today, Inside Israel, & Developments to Watch.

Inside the IDF: Zamir expelled multiple ex-generals from reserve duty, fired the Gaza Division intel officer and reprimanded serving commanders, while Katz froze senior IDF appointments and ordered a new review of the Turge-man report; at the same time, Haredi Hashmonaim soldiers complete basic. See Inside Israel.

Iran / Axis: Iran–Russia nuclear laser cooperation surfaces, IRGC deployments deepen in Yemen and the Red Sea, a Houthi court sentences 18 "spies" to death, and Trump moves to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a foreign terror organization. See Israel and the World & Developments to Watch.

Diplomacy & Info-War: India and Azerbaijan expand trade and defense ties with Jerusalem while Qatar's Doha Forum platforms Iranian and Brotherhood figures and X's new location feature exposes armies of fake "Gazan" and "America First" accounts posting from Turkey, Pakistan and North Africa. See Israel and the World & Briefly Noted.

ISRAEL is enforcing reality on three fronts at once: decapitation strikes in Dahieh, lethal ROE along the Yellow Line, and sector-wide raids in Judea and Samaria aimed at PA cops who moonlight as terrorists. Iran, for its part, is trying to widen the board—lasers with Russia, IRGC in Yemen, Houthis executing "spies"—while letting Hezbollah decide how much humiliation it can eat without triggering an air war. Inside the house, the old avoidance games are breaking: the IDF is finally handing out personal responsibility, ministers are fighting over who gets to define October 7, and real service tracks are opening for Haredim while the political class still argues about slogans.

The War Today

Hezbollah's War Cabinet Loses Its Brains in Dahieh

Israel confirmed it eliminated Hezbollah's chief of staff, Haytham Ali Tabataba'i, in a precision strike in Beirut's Dahieh, along with four senior operatives, after already killing regional rebuilders in Meifadoun, Houla and elsewhere in the south. Tabataba'i, long-time Radwan commander and de facto military boss since Northern Arrows, was responsible for rebuilding Hezbollah's forces, deepening ties to the Houthis and pushing to dump the ceasefire and re-open a northern war; the IDF says it hit him to stop that buildup and vows not to let Hezbollah restore its pre-October 7 posture while still "respecting" the Lebanon understandings. The army has quietly raised alert levels, reinforced air defenses and run surprise readiness drills on the Syria-Lebanon line, gaming options that range from rocket salvos and raids on forward posts to terror abroad. Beirut's president is suddenly demanding a "state monopoly on weapons" south of the Litani as if the LAF could disarm anyone, while at least one prominent Lebanese MP openly calls Hezbollah a liability and demands implementation of the US-Saudi disarmament plan.

ASSESSMENT

Israel just crossed a symbolic line — killing Hezbollah's No. 2 in Dahieh itself — and Hezbollah's problem is simple: any real response risks a short war that would finish what Northern Arrows started, while restraint exposes it as Iran's very expensive scarecrow. The IDF has seized the initiative in the north and is using the ceasefire framework as legal cover for a systematic decapitation and denial campaign; whether this stays "between the rounds" or tips into the next one depends less on Beirut's rhetoric than on how much humiliation Tehran is prepared to swallow.

Gaza's War Moves Underground — and Against Hamas

In Gaza, the ceasefire is more of a rules-of-engagement document, not a truce. Three more terrorists were killed after crossing the Yellow Line near Khan Yunis, multiple Hamas commanders were eliminated in targeted home strikes, and the Rafah tunnel pocket remains under 24/7 watch — with interrogations confirming 60–80 fighters trapped in sealed segments, low on food and water. Hamas is yelling to mediators that the "agreement is over," racing delegations to Cairo and blaming Israel for "advancing westward" even as its own men keep emerging east of the line to shoot at Kfir and Nahal units. Inside the strip, the internal map is shifting: five anti-Hamas militias now operate from IDF-held yellow-zone bases, including a new outfit in eastern Khan Yunis led by Shawqi Abu Nasira — a former PA officer who filmed himself telling masked fighters their "dirty shoes are more honorable than the biggest beard in Hamas" while his men chant "Death to Hamas." Hamas rushed to issue a disavowal, but between their starving tunnel contingent, precision leadership decapitations and emerging local armed rivals, its grip on the ground is clearly more brittle than its propaganda suggests. It is important to remember, however, that it is Hamas that has some Gazans frustrated not their

ideology—the majority still support both Hamas and the atrocities of October 7.

ASSESSMENT

The ceasefire is functionally dead for Hamas and alive for Israel: Jerusalem still honors the humanitarian lanes and coordination, but any contact with IDF lines or movement out of tunnels now triggers lethal fire tied directly into US-approved targeting. Hamas threatens to “end the agreement” because the agreement, as enforced, is finally ending its last serious military pocket in Rafah. This is the moment to finish the job east of the Yellow Line, not to start pretending Hamas is a legitimate security partner in any “day after” scheme.

Judea–Samaria: IDF Moves From Nightly Raids Toward a Sector-Wide Operation

Over the past week, the IDF, Shin Bet and Border Police ran a broad counterterrorism sweep across Judea and Samaria: more than 60 wanted suspects arrested (including 18 Hamas operatives), two weapons factories shut, and rifles, pistols, explosives and terror-financed vehicles seized in Etzion, Judea, Binyamin, Menashe, Shomron and Ephraim brigade sectors. In a focused Menashe/Samaria operation, Yamam eliminated the PA police officer who shot and wounded a reservist near Nablus, captured another PA cop who surrendered, and arrested multiple gunmen in Burqin, Far’a, Qabatiya and the Barta’a area — including an explosives maker and inciters tied to recent attacks. Senior Central Command officers now openly talk about preparing a large operation in the villages as the PA’s security apparatus shows itself not as a stabilizer but as one more address for Iranian and Hamas money and guns.

ASSESSMENT

The distinction between “PA police” and terrorist is often a uniform, not an ideology. The raids are what keep Iran’s Judea and Samaria project from becoming Gaza 2.0, and the next step is obvious: treat PA-controlled pockets that generate shooters like hostile spaces for the purpose of targeting, while ignoring the NGO–EU noise about “settler violence” that exists mainly to obscure who is actually doing the killing. If Israel wants to keep the war contained, it has to stay on the offensive in the one arena Iran is betting will explode next.

Inside Israel

Zamir Cleans House as Katz Moves to Reclaim the Wheel

IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir delivered a salvo of more real, personal consequences for October 7: expelling multiple ex-generals from reserve duty, dismissing the Gaza Division intelligence officer who ignored the “Jericho Wall” warnings, reprimanding current commanders, and keeping Military Intelligence chief Shlomi Binder in place only because replacing him mid-crisis risks operational blindness. Within hours, Defense Minister Israel Katz

countered the move by freezing senior IDF appointments, ordering the Defense Ministry comptroller to re-open the Turgeman Committee's work, and demanding a deeper review of every red-flagged internal probe — including intelligence failures the IDF never fully investigated. Katz wants uniform criteria for personal responsibility; Zamir wants a clean chain of command before the next campaign.

ASSESSMENT

This is now a structural confrontation over who defines the truth of October 7 — the IDF, the Defense Ministry, or the judiciary that spent a decade tying the army's hands and now insists on policing its own. Zamir's purge signals that the army is finally willing to pay a price to rebuild credibility; Katz's freeze signals that political oversight won't let the General Staff become the sole author of history. The only dangerous option is the one the High Court prefers: letting the same system that failed on October 7 investigate itself behind closed doors. If Israel wants a functioning security order before the next Iran-Hezbollah round, civilian and military accountability must run in parallel — but the judiciary cannot be allowed to dominate the process again.

The Country Splits Between Those Who Serve and Those Who Stall

While the political class argues over draft exemptions, the ground reality shifts beneath it. The Haredi Hashmonaim Brigade — now in its third cohort — held a declaration ceremony blending military service with full religious observance: gender separation, prayer-based singing, and combat-trained yeshiva graduates whose classmates don't even know they've enlisted. Some are 40-plus reservists joining for the first time because “after two years of war, there's no more luxury to sit this out.” And the political blocs are shifting: Naftali Bennett hints he's willing to sit with Arab parties; Mansour Abbas positions Ra'am to fight an impending Muslim Brotherhood ban; Yesh Atid insiders resign as the party collapses under its own identity crisis.

ASSESSMENT

Israel is reorganizing itself around a single dividing line: who shows up when the country burns. The army has a manpower deficit, the Court is demanding criminal enforcement on draft evasion in 45 days, and real service pathways for Haredim are taking shape faster than the Knesset can legislate. The next election will not be about “right vs. left” but about who carries the rifle — and who expects someone else's son to carry it for them.

Smotrich and Central Command Move Faster Than Diplomats

Central Command approved ten new municipal jurisdiction areas across Samaria and the Jordan Valley — including the new community of Gador — updating or establishing the planning footprint for Leshem, Kerem Re'im, Neria, Havat Gilad, Ibei HaNahal, Parashim, Ovnat, Massu'a and Har Adar. This comes after 49 such moves earlier this year and dovetails with the government mandate to establish fifty new communities. The decisions were coordinated with the Civil Administration and security brass, signaling that settlement policy is no longer symbolic but integrated into Israel's long-term defensive geometry: depth in the Jordan Valley, continuity in the ridge, and

population anchoring where Iran seeks to build its next front using PA police, Hamas cells and foreign-funded NGOs.

ASSESSMENT

Judea and Samaria is the war's quiet center of gravity. While the media obsesses over a fringe of violent teens, Israel is shaping the map that will prevent an Iranian rocket corridor from reaching Highway 6. Smotrich, Bluth, Ben-Gvir, and the security establishment are aligning policy and ground truth — and quietly undoing twenty years of diplomatic self-deterrence.

Israel and the World

Iran Tightens the Axis as Doha Sells Narratives and Washington Manages Optics

Israel's Beirut strike that killed Hezbollah Chief of Staff Haytham Ali Tabataba'i detonated the axis's nerves: IDF intelligence assesses that Tehran, not Beirut, will decide the response, with Iranian officials warning that a weak reply is fatal and a strong reply is suicidal. Lebanon's president, parroting the script, begged the "international community" to stop Israel while Hezbollah rebuilt logistics corridors, drones, and command posts exactly where 1701 forbids them. At the same time, evidence surfaced of Iranian nuclear scientists shopping laser-enrichment techniques in Russia, while Iran begged MBS to revive US nuclear talks to delay the next Israeli strike cycle. The Houthis executed "spies," IRGC officers flowed into Yemen, and the CIA quietly confirmed Hezbollah has expanded capability since the 2024 war—because Lebanon's state institutions are now theater props. On the diplomatic front, Trump announced the Muslim Brotherhood will be designated a terrorist organization, while Qatar simultaneously hosted a Doha Forum starring Iranian propagandists, Muslim Brotherhood officials, Tucker Carlson's financiers, and Al Jazeera personalities who openly work with PIJ and Hamas.

ASSESSMENT

The axis is building for the sequel while Western institutions host panels on "accountability" and bankroll the proxies causing the war. Hezbollah's loss in Dahieh is operationally massive; its dilemma—hit Israel and face a short devastating air war, or swallow humiliation and expose weakness—moves the region toward a forced decision. Tehran is signaling panic while racing to close the enrichment gap and test Israel's red lines in the North, Judea and Samaria, and in the centrifuges. And Qatar's information arm—Al Jazeera, CNN-Doha, coordinated influence ops on X, and Tucker Carlson and friends—continues running the narrative rear-base for Iran's coalition. It is a multi-front pressure campaign built to constrain Israel's timing.

Jerusalem Deepens Ties with Real Partners, Not Performative Ones

India's Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal arrived with a 100-person business delegation, restarted Free Trade Agreement talks after 15 years, and told Israeli leaders that the partnership is "destined for bigger things"—especially in AI, advanced manufacturing, infrastructure, and defense. The model is

simple: Israeli innovation, Indian production scale, and a shared fight against jihadist terror after India's Pahalgam massacre. Azerbaijan reinforced the same alignment: a 70-person intergovernmental summit in Jerusalem expanded cooperation in energy, agriculture, transport, digitalization, and defense—underscoring why Baku is the most strategically significant Muslim country in Israel's orbit and the one keeping Iran genuinely nervous. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar is off to Argentina and Paraguay with a business delegation, leveraging Milei's realignment toward Israel and opening new trade corridors in Latin America. Even Canada—while pretending to freeze arms exports—is still routing TNT, explosives, and F-35 components through US factories into Israeli systems, proving that reality beats rhetoric.

ASSESSMENT

Israel's trade and diplomatic map is shifting away from the performative West and toward states that share security interests, energy dependencies, and a worldview unpolluted by campus slogans. India sees Israel as a force multiplier; Azerbaijan sees Israel as a deterrent spine against Iran; Latin America's pro-Israel governments see Jerusalem as a strategic partner, not a moral liability. This is the coalition that will matter in the next decade—and in the next war. Israel's job is to keep tightening these alliances while ignoring Europe's abstractions and Washington's waffling.

Fake Gazans, Qatari Media, and a Western Press That Plays Along

The rollout of X's new location-verification feature ripped the mask off an entire ecosystem of anti-Israel and antisemitic accounts: "Gazan" influencers posting from London cafés, Indonesian log-ins claiming starvation in Rafah, PIJ-aligned pages broadcasting from Turkey, fake British journalists operating out of Thailand, and far-right "America First" accounts running from Pakistan and North Africa. Many raised tens of thousands of dollars in fraudulent Gaza GoFundMes. On the same field, Qatar expanded its propaganda beachhead: earlier this autumn CNN launched a Qatari-funded studio and debuted an embarrassing state-sponsored "Creators" show that showcased Doha as a wonderland and ignored the monarchy's censorship laws; the Doha Forum will platform Iranian regime officials, Muslim Brotherhood figures, and Tucker Carlson's business partners—wrapped in panels pushing Qatari talking points on "Israeli crimes." The same Qatar pumping money into US campuses via the Qatar Foundation—\$20 billion, per ISGAP—continues to fund movements that launder Hamas narratives into Western public opinion.

ASSESSMENT

Israel isn't just fighting terrorists—it's fighting their information supply chain. Qatar finances the universities that radicalize Western students, the media properties that launder propaganda, and the online networks that pose as American populists or Gazan civilians. X's transparency tool confirmed what analysts suspected for years: the anti-Israel discourse online is heavily astroturfed by foreign actors seeking to poison US-Israel relations. Israel must treat information warfare as a national security theater—not a PR problem—and push allies to confront Qatar's influence machine with the same seriousness they apply to other cyber threats.

Briefly Noted

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

Jerusalem Post: Donald Trump said he will formally designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a foreign terrorist organization and praised Israel for outlawing its branches. This would realign US policy with the reality Israelis live in daily and finally put legal teeth on an ideology that has been laundering jihadism through Western institutions for decades.

Ynet: Israeli officials fear mediators quietly assured Hamas it could keep parts of its arsenal and political influence under the Trump deal in exchange for releasing hostages. If true, it would leave Israel holding a ceasefire that preserves the enemy's core capability—exactly the scenario that leads to the next October 7 unless Jerusalem acts independently.

Times of Israel: Ahead of the pope's visit, Christians in Turkey say they still face discrimination, exclusion from civil-service roles, and violence under Erdogan's Islamist-nationalist rule. It's a reminder that the same Turkey lecturing Israel on "human rights" can't guarantee full citizenship to the tiny remnant of Christians still surviving there.

JNS: A Ghent museum admitted it holds Nazi-looted Jewish art but refuses restitution, claiming—without evidence—that the family was compensated.

Domestic & Law

Times of Israel: The Hostages Forum is shuttering its offices now that only three families remain, shifting to a volunteer model and passing remaining resources directly to them. It marks the end of a national pressure engine that shaped two years of politics—and exposes how thin the public infrastructure is once private donors move on.

Jerusalem Post: NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch apologized to Park East Synagogue after pro-Palestinian protesters chanted "Death to the IDF" and blocked the entrance during an aliyah event.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

Jerusalem Post: Israel is inching toward a \$1 trillion economy even as infrastructure, energy capacity, and bureaucracy lag dangerously behind. Israel now has a world-class tech GDP sitting on top of "inadequate" planning systems—a mismatch that will choke growth unless the state starts building like it wants to win.

Frontline & Security

JNS: Former senior officers say the IDF's doctrine of "deterrence" let Hamas maneuver unseen, bury warnings, and replace decisive victory with a target-bank bureaucracy.

Culture, Religion & Society

JTA: New York set a Guinness record for the world's largest Shabbat dinner, with 2,761 people packing the Javits Center.

Ynet: Taiwan launched a scholarship program for Israeli students affected by the war, expanding months of humanitarian aid and solidarity since October 7. It's a small country punching far above its weight—and a reminder that real allies don't just issue statements, they show up with money, logistics, and empathy.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

Hezbollah Weighs a Non-Military Response — Israel raised air-defense alert levels nationwide after killing Tabataba'i, and intelligence now warns Hezbollah may skip rocket fire and instead target Israeli or Jewish interests abroad. Tehran—not Beirut—is choosing the response profile, and overseas attacks avoid giving Israel the pretext for a short air war that Hezbollah cannot survive. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Dahieh Funeral Under Drone Umbrella — Israeli UAVs loitered directly over Tabataba'i's funeral in Dahieh as jets flew mock runs over Nabatieh and Iqlim al-Tuffah, triggering GPS disruption across the south. Israel is signaling it owns the airspace even during peak Hezbollah symbolism—an escalation ladder step that leaves Hezbollah with embarrassment or escalation.

Syria Drifts Back to Moscow — Syria's foreign minister said Damascus may renegotiate the Hmeimim base deal and bring Russian forces deeper into the south. Iran wants Russian cover to reconstitute its Golan corridor, and any Moscow redeployment risks complicating Israel's freedom of action on the Syrian line.

Gaza & Southern Theater

Yellow Line Breach Rate Ticks Up — Three armed terrorists crossed near Khan Yunis and were killed within seconds by directed airstrikes; more movement seen near Kfir positions. It shows that starving tunnel remnants are still probing the belt, and Israel's shoot-on-contact rules are becoming anchoring doctrine for the rest of the ceasefire period.

Judea & Samaria

Multi-Brigade Sweep Expands Target Set — Simultaneous raids across Tell, Hebron, Tulkarm, Burqin, Qabatiya and Benyamin seized explosives, rifles and terror-financed vehicles while eliminating a PA police gunman. The PA's uniformed networks are still indistinguishable from the terror economy, and Central Command is preparing for a broader village operation. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

Iran–Russia Laser Work Signals War Prep — Revealed meetings between Iranian nuclear scientists and Russian laser-tech firms point to research enabling weapons design without a physical test. This is Tehran hardening its breakout path precisely when IRGC deployments rise in Yemen and the Red Sea—an alignment that shortens Israel’s strike clock. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Houthi Stage Mass Executions — A Houthi court sentenced 18 Yemenis to death for “spying” for the US, Israel, UK and Saudi Arabia. It’s classic proxy behavior before escalation: pre-emptive internal terror to secure discipline ahead of a wider campaign against Israeli maritime targets.

Diplomatic & Legal

Saudi F-35 Package Enters Red-Zone Phase — Washington confirmed the downgraded F-35 sale to Riyadh while reaffirming its commitment to Israel’s QME; Jerusalem still opposes the deal outright. The risk is not the jets—it’s the precedent: once the platform proliferates in the Gulf, Turkey will reopen its own bid, eroding the airpower gap Israel relies on.

Home Front & Politics

Katz Freezes Senior IDF Promotions — Defense Minister Katz halted high-level appointments pending a 30-day comptroller review of the Turgeman probe and all red-flagged Oct 7 investigations.

Closing Analysis

A few things hardened today. First, the northern file: killing Tabataba’i inside Dahieh and then flying drones over his funeral is Israel saying out loud that “understandings” are now a legal envelope for active decapitation, not a leash. Hezbollah’s choice is ugly: answer in a way that justifies a short, heavy Israeli campaign, or keep swallowing blows until even the Arab street realizes the “resistance” can’t protect its own officers. Tehran will try to script some theatrical response, but every day that passes without a serious Hezbollah move is another day the deterrence balance tilts Israel’s way.

Second, Gaza: the ceasefire now works only in one direction. For Israel it’s a fire-control framework—aid corridors, ROE, coordination with the Americans. For Hamas it’s a meat grinder: trapped tunnel cells hungry, commanders killed in their homes, and armed Gazans in the yellow zone openly saying Hamas are the traitors. That doesn’t mean Gazans turned into Zionists overnight; it means Hamas’s monopoly on fear is cracking. The question is whether Israel finishes clearing everything east of the Yellow Line before Washington tries to bolt a “political horizon” back onto this mess.

Third, the home front: Zamir’s punishments and Katz’s freeze are not inside baseball. They decide who runs the next Lebanon or Iran round, and whether the IDF answers to commanders who still believe in decisive victory or to

lawyers who think deterrence theory will save them. At the same time, Haredi soldiers in Hashmonaim, new settlement jurisdictions in Samaria and the Valley all point in the same direction: the country is reordering itself around service, sovereignty and depth, not process.

The next days and weeks will tell us three things: whether Hezbollah limits itself to symbolic noise or risks testing the north; whether Hamas keeps throwing starving gunmen at the Yellow Line and finally blows up the fiction of a “phase,” and whether Israel’s leadership has the stomach to lock in these enforcement gains rather than drifting back to the comfortable lies that gave us October 7.

The side that enforces reality wins. The side that clings to its own scripts gets surprised.

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