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READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

Thursday, November 27

Hamas surfaces starving, Hezbollah waits for its turn, and Washington decides how serious it is about the Brotherhood.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE Both issues expose a deeper problem: countries that want Israeli cooperation on trade, security and regional connectivity while keeping one foot in Iran's orbit—or in Europe's anti-Israel narrative machine. Armenia's flirtation with sanctions-busting and Iran-tied commerce demands clarity from Jerusalem. Regional cooperation can move forward only if Yerevan limits Tehran's use of Armenian territory. France's situation is simpler: if Paris wants its consulate protected, it can start by respecting Israel's sovereignty over its own capital. Only states that treat Israel as an ally—rather than a punching bag—get the benefits of alliance.

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Israel Brief: Thursday, November 27

Hamas surfaces starving, Hezbollah waits for its turn, and Washington decides how serious it is about the Brotherhood.

SHALOM, friends, and Happy Thanksgiving — whether you're American or not, at home or abroad. The day has always felt like a kind of secular Sukkot. One big communal pause to sit with family, eat far too much, and remember that gratitude is its own kind of shelter.

Flash Brief

(Section present; content subsumed in War Today sections below)

The War Today

HAMAS SURFACES STARVING; ISRAEL TIGHTENS THE NOOSE

Israel is collapsing Hamas's last serious underground sanctuary in Rafah, and the results are breaking into daylight. Over the past 24 hours, IDF surveillance and ground units eliminated a Hamas sniper preparing an imminent attack in the north, killed two Islamic Jihad gunmen crossing the Yellow Line in the south, and struck six armed terrorists erupting from a tunnel in eastern Rafah—followed by Nahal fighters killing three more at close range and arresting two who survived long enough to reach custody. The Abu Shabab and Abu Nasira militias both captured or killed tunnel fugitives this week, with one handing four Hamas operatives directly to the IDF after they tried to infiltrate the humanitarian zone. Interrogations continue to confirm the same pattern: tunnel cells running out of air, food, and command; bodies decomposing underground; commanders weighing suicidal chargings; rank-and-file fighters surfacing because “there was no water.” Jerusalem proposed a surrender-for-disarmament exit; Hamas refused. Cairo, Ankara, and Doha floated an absurd counteroffer to let Hamas retain “light weapons.” Israel rightly dismissed it, and even the Americans admit no foreign force will enter Hamas-run “Old Gaza.” Heavy machinery is now slated to enter Rafah next week to prepare “Green Rafah,” the first slice of Trump's next-phase plan—an area under Israeli control, sealed from Hamas influence, and intended to house Gazans who want no part of the terror cartel that ruined their lives. We'll see how that works out when the populace still broadly supports Hamas and the October 7 atrocities.

ASSESSMENT

Israel is exploiting tunnel attrition, militia integration, and command of the Yellow Line to shred Hamas's last pocket of hard power. The terror group is trying to freeze the battlefield long enough to negotiate relevance into Trump's second phase; Israel is doing the opposite—advancing facts on the ground that make Hamas's survival impossible west of the line. The turning point is already visible: the more terrorists surface hungry, confused, and alone, the less leverage remains for Hamas in Cairo. Israel should keep tightening the belt—every fugitive killed or captured is one less bargaining chip and one more confirmation that the “ceasefire” has become Hamas's prison—let's not give them an early release.

HEZBOLLAH'S DELAY JUST MAKES THE BILL BIGGER

On the northern front, Israel keeps rewriting the topography while Hezbollah stalls somewhere between pride and survival. Guided by real-time intelligence, the IAF hit multiple Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon today, destroying launch sites, weapons stores and forward posts used to stage attacks on IDF troops. Lebanese media again mutter that Washington has given Israel a “green light” for further action, while Egypt's foreign minister quietly told Beirut the real message: disarm south of the Litani, start rolling back north of it, and avoid “hostile action against Israel” or face an unlimited Israeli escalation before year's end. At the same time, Israel's defense minister warns that forces in Syria are “considering invading Golan towns,” with Houthi elements already noted on the Syrian chessboard, and huge fires at Iraq's Khor Mor gasfield after a reported missile strike remind everyone how far the axis is willing to throw hardware. The UN Human Rights Committee claims 127 Lebanese “civilians” killed by Israel since the ceasefire with local channels immediately challenging the number and demanding the UN publish the list—promising to show that at least half are Hezbollah operatives in civilian clothes.

ASSESSMENT

Today's strikes and Egypt's warnings show that key regional players assume an Israeli escalation is not a question of if but when if Hezbollah keeps its arsenal and forward deployment intact. Iran wants a calibrated retaliation that saves face without inviting a war it can ill afford—especially as Israel is continuing to dismantle the infrastructure that would fight that war.

SAMARIA CLEANS OUT MURDERERS AS TURKEY AND JORDAN FEED THE GUN BELT

Central Command chief Avi Bluth now confirms there are zero Palestinian fugitives who murdered Israelis still roaming free. The killers of Gideon Perry, ז”ל, Eliya Hilel, ז”ל, and Diego Shvisha Harsaj, ז”ל, are either dead or in custody, and a three-brigade operation across the Tubas–Tammun belt has already hit more than 220 locations—safe houses, weapons caches, control rooms—while precision airstrikes sealed off zones before ground forces moved in. Troops uncovered a structured observation and command room, seized tens of thousands in terror funds, detained wanted men and re-arrested Muhammad Alaa Bani Ouda, released in the last deal and now caught wounded as an ambulance tried to ferry him out of Tammun. Parallel investigations exposed

a Hamas pipeline run out of Turkey. An Arab Israeli based there, Ahmad Zarzur, moved crypto cash through local money changers, bought weapons from Negev dealers and smuggled them into Judea and Samaria—indictments are coming. On the eastern border, a drone from Jordan loaded with ten pistols was detected, shot down and recovered by the Yoav Brigade. Nearer Jerusalem, cameras filmed repeated infiltrations over the Atarot barrier—nominally “workers,” functionally an uncontrolled breach—while in Qabatiya a terrorist used a metal fire extinguisher packed with explosives as an IED against paratroopers and was killed, and a pre-dawn terror alert rattled Kochav Yaakov. At the same time, dozens of Arabs from Kadum and Beit Lid stormed the Shirat Zion homestead near Kedumim with stones and clubs, injuring farmers, trashing homes and holy items after weeks of arson and assaults that residents say the army treated as noise until it was almost too late, even as Fatah complains to Arab media that Israel is “exploiting Gaza” to “control the West Bank” and demands punitive measures for what is, in reality, Israel finally dismantling the infrastructure they let grow.

ASSESSMENT

Judea and Samaria heats up. Turkey as a financial rear-base. Jordanian airspace as a smuggling corridor. Village belts like Tammun–Tubas as intended battalion zones. Hilltop farms like Shirat Zion as the last physical barrier between that network and Highway 6. Bluth’s clean-out of every fugitive murderer proves that when the state treats the area as more than an Oslo relic, the terror curve bends fast. The next phase is obvious: keep hammering the money and weapons pipelines from Turkey and Jordan, defend the Jewish homesteads that anchor depth on the ridge, and stop pretending that PA “governance” is anything but another layer of the same project Israel is now finally moving to break.

Inside Israel

IDF HARDENS ITS TECH AS ISRAEL’S BUREAUCRACIES WRESTLE FOR CONTROL

In Jerusalem, the High Court held another round over Justice Minister Yariv Levin’s appointment of retired judge Yosefh Ben-Hamo to oversee the Sde Teiman leak probe into former MAG Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi. The Attorney General’s camp claims Ben-Hamo doesn’t fit the “senior state employee” criteria the court itself invented. Levin’s lawyer replies that two public committees and the Civil Service Commission approved the pick and that every hour of delay risks obstruction of justice in a case that touches the judicial establishment’s own conduct. Inside the same building, hecklers called Court President Yitzhak Amit a “criminal” over his handling of the affair, underscoring how far public trust has eroded. Parallel to the courtroom drama, the IDF is tightening its own discipline: a new directive will ban Android phones for officers from lieutenant colonel up and standardize IDF-issued devices to iPhones to cut exploit surfaces, building on “Morpheus,” the AI that now scans soldiers’ public social media after Hamas turned TikToks and WhatsApp groups into an intelligence gold mine. The chief of staff is telling commanders that “leadership that recognizes failure and dares to lead change” is the only acceptable standard; Elbit’s CEO says drones already dominate

battlefields and soon only 5% will remain under direct human control. Meanwhile, residents of northern towns hit by Iranian missiles last year are still stuck in a fight between municipalities and the Tax Authority over rebuilding budgets, living proof that bureaucracies move far slower than rockets.

ASSESSMENT

The same question runs through all of this: who actually runs Israel when it matters—the elected government and its security chiefs, or an unelected legal and bureaucratic caste that sees itself as the final word? Levin’s push to put an external overseer on a probe touching Sde Teiman, and Zamir’s move to standardize secure devices, both pull in the same direction: a state that admits its failures and then changes tools, doctrine, and personnel accordingly. If the courts succeed in neutering that process, Israel will go into the next northern or Iranian round with its hands half-tied again. Say what you want about the coalition, but if the government holds its line, you’ll see a country whose political and military systems finally match the seriousness of the settlers on the ridge and the soldiers in Rafah.

CRIME, SMUGGLING AND STRAY FIRE PUSH THE STATE TO SHOW UP

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir spent the day in Tel Sheva after another Bedouin blood-feud murder, arguing with locals who accuse him of “incitement” as he claims that 30 years of Likud governments left the Negev to criminal clans, illegal building and weapons. At the same time, police footage shows gangs smashing into an Ofakim jewelry store with clubs, a new cyber incident blasted Arabic messages over public-transport speakers, and investigators exposed how drugs and iPhone 17s are being smuggled into Gaza via Rahat and aid-truck tires. In Jerusalem’s Pisgat Ze’ev, residents keep pulling bullets off balconies as sustained gunfire from Shuafat and Anata crosses the barrier and injures bystanders. Ben-Gvir answers that he will “restore governance,” boasting of thousands of illegal Bedouin structures already demolished and insisting that whoever serves the state has him as an ally, and whoever terrorizes it will be “taken down.”

ASSESSMENT

This is the real internal front: Arab and Bedouin areas where the state turned away from the lawlessness for decades now sit on top of smuggling pipelines, gunfire corridors and clan militias. Ben-Gvir is doing what previous governments avoided—tying demolitions, policing and border enforcement into a single concept of sovereignty—and of course the beneficiaries of the vacuum hate him for it.

Israel and the World

WASHINGTON PARTIALLY WAKES UP AS DOHA AND DUBLIN PUSH A NEW BLOOD LIBEL

Washington is inching toward a long-delayed showdown with the Muslim Brotherhood network. Texas formally designated the Brotherhood and CAIR as terrorist entities. Multiple federal reports detail CAIR’s money pipelines into campus agitation. And President Trump ordered State and Treasury to evaluate terror listings for Brotherhood branches from Jordan to Lebanon—of course, the execution of that order leaves a bit to be desired and grants some legitimacy to the Muslim Brotherhood overall. Senator Ted Budd’s new

bill would cut federal funding to any jurisdiction enforcing ICC warrants on US allies after New York's incoming mayor bragged he'd arrest Netanyahu on arrival. Meanwhile, Qatar and Ireland—two states whose moral courage ends right about where Hamas's talking points begin—used the OPCW plenary to accuse Israel of deploying “chemical weapons,” a medieval blood libel in modern form. Qatar now chairs the OPCW council through 2030, which tells you everything about who is writing the script inside The Hague. Against that backdrop, the US and Europe watch Hamas reassert control in parts of Gaza while Fatah leaders like Rajoub call for unity “for the struggle,” not for peace. On Israel's near flank, Armenia courts Jerusalem on regional corridors while still serving as a sanctions-evading path for Tehran and allowing antisemitic vandalism and diaspora lobbies to frame Israel–Azerbaijan ties as a threat.

ASSESSMENT

Qatar's ascent inside the chemical-weapons watchdog while it bankrolls Hamas, runs the information war, and now accuses Israel of chemical attacks is the architecture of a global campaign. Israel should treat every arena—OPCW, ICC, UN, CAIR's campus operations—as part of one continuous front. If there's a Thanksgiving blessing here, it's a grim one: at least the mask is coming off.

IRAN'S PROXIES SEEK UNITY AS ISRAEL SHUTS THEIR WINDOWS

As Israel closes out the last fugitive murderers in Judea and Samaria and crushes Iranian pipelines moving guns from Turkey and Jordan, Fatah leaders like Jibril Rajoub are calling for an “urgent” unity meeting with Hamas. Their reasoning is naked: October 7 remains wildly popular among Palestinians (to say nothing of the wider Islamist world), international pressure on Israel grows, and Fatah wants to lead—not compete with—the “struggle.” Official PA TV echoes it: unite for the next confrontation. This is the same PA that runs pay-for-slay laws, shelters terrorists, and turns its security forces into armed cells the IDF keeps catching. Abroad, Fatah's “diaspora diplomacy” frames Netanyahu as a “Nazi” while expecting Europe to deliver statehood as a reward.

ASSESSMENT

The PA isn't preparing to replace Hamas. It's preparing to merge with it lest it succumb to it. Anyone selling Ramallah as a “moderate alternative” is either naïve at best or just complicit. Israel's task is the opposite: isolate the PA's security organs, expose their coordination with terror, and refuse any U.S. or European push to treat a Fatah–Hamas confederation as a “partner.” The stronger Israel hits Hamas in Rafah and its networks in Samaria, the harder Fatah will race to avoid being left behind by the street it helped educate.

FRENCH DIPLOMACY DEMANDS ISRAELI SECURITY, NOT ISRAELI SOVEREIGNTY

France demanded Israel boost consulate security in Jerusalem after protests—this from the same government that recognized “Palestine,” triggered mass demonstrations, and now insists Israel protect a mission that serves Palestinian political interests from within Israel's own capital—while not serving Israelis. MKs from Religious Zionism reminded the French rep on-site: “You represent our enemies from here. That won't last.” Meanwhile, Armenia's

deputy foreign minister arrived in Israel to promote the US-backed TRIPP corridor and “reset” relations, but the subtext is harder: Yerevan maintains deep logistical, energy and trade ties with Iran, remains a known sanctions-bypass route, and its diaspora lobby in the US routinely campaigns to punish Israel for its alliance with Azerbaijan. Jewish sites in Yerevan have faced repeated vandalism and arson attempts, and the Armenian Quarter land dispute in Jerusalem became a global PR flare-up with accusations of “ethnic cleansing.”

ASSESSMENT

Both issues expose a deeper problem: countries that want Israeli cooperation on trade, security and regional connectivity while keeping one foot in Iran’s orbit—or in Europe’s anti-Israel narrative machine. Armenia’s flirtation with sanctions-busting and Iran-tied commerce demands clarity from Jerusalem. Regional cooperation can move forward only if Yerevan limits Tehran’s use of Armenian territory. France’s situation is simpler: if Paris wants its consulate protected, it can start by respecting Israel’s sovereignty over its own capital. Only states that treat Israel as an ally—rather than a punching bag—get the benefits of alliance.

Briefly Noted

CULTURE, RELIGION & SOCIETY

Jerusalem Post: Peter Beinart’s lecture at Tel Aviv University drew fire from both the BDS campaign, which accused him of “whitewashing genocide,” and Israeli right-wing activists who demanded the event be canceled.

Algemeiner: A 12-ton early-20th-century railcar of the type used to deport Jews to Treblinka was installed on the fourth floor of the still-unfinished Holocaust Museum Boston. The design—where passersby will see visitors enter the car but not exit—turns the artifact into a permanent indictment of “ordinary” people who kept genocidal systems running by just doing their jobs and looking away.

JTA: Descendants of the 10,000 Jews who arrived through the “Ellis Island of the West” are reviving the story of the Galveston Movement, which redirected refugees from czarist pogroms into Texas and the American interior.

DIPLOMACY & GEOPOLITICS

Jerusalem Post: After an Afghan national who entered the U.S. in 2021 allegedly shot two National Guard members near the White House, Washington froze processing of all Afghan immigration requests and deployed extra Guard units to the capital. The attack turbocharges Trump’s argument that lax vetting imports jihad risk into the U.S. homeland—and will harden political tolerance for stricter immigration and counterterror policies.

FRONTLINE & SECURITY

Ynet: Israeli intelligence lured Dr. Marwan al-Hams—Rafah hospital chief, Hamas brigade doctor, and the man who handled Hadar Goldin’s body in 2014—into an undercover sting by posing as a European film crew, then arrested him at the tunnel complex where Goldin’s remains were kept.

Israel National News: A UNIFIL spokesperson boasted that peacekeepers had found over 360 weapons caches in southern Lebanon, while claiming they've seen "no evidence" of Hezbollah military activity in their area. In other words, they're proudly collecting abandoned junk while the real arsenal sits under homes and mosques—another reminder that 1701's "implementation" is mostly theater.

Developments to Watch

NORTHERN FRONT (LEBANON / SYRIA)

Iron Beam Quietly Enters the Lineup – Israel has deployed the Iron Beam laser air-defense system in the north for the first time, adding a new layer to the existing Iron Dome / David's Sling / Arrow stack after the Tabataba'i's elimination. If it performs as advertised against rockets and drones, Hezbollah's cost-benefit calculus slips.

Egypt Privately Warns Beirut: Disarm or Get Hit – Lebanon's Al-Akhbar reports Egypt's foreign minister told Lebanese leaders they must fully disarm south of the Litani, start disarmament north of it, and avoid hostile acts against Israel—or face "inevitable Israeli escalation" with no ceiling before year's end. When Cairo is spelling out Israeli red lines more bluntly than the UN, it's a sign the region assumes another northern round is coming if Hezbollah keeps clinging to its arsenal. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

GAZA & SOUTHERN THEATER

Phase Two Stalls on 'Old Gaza' and Hamas Rifles – In Cairo, Egypt, Qatar and Turkey are pushing a deal that lets Hamas retain "light weapons" and invites foreign Muslim forces only into IDF-controlled "New Gaza," while nobody volunteers to police Hamas-run "Old Gaza." The more Washington and its partners chase this fantasy, the clearer it becomes that only the IDF will actually disarm Hamas west of the Yellow Line—if Israel has the stamina to ignore the noise. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Rahat–Gaza Smuggling Route Exposed – New footage shows drugs and brand-new iPhone 17s being smuggled from Israel into Gaza via Rahat and "humanitarian" truck tires, even as aid convoys roll under international supervision.

JUDEA & SAMARIA

Tammun Belt Under Sustained Lockdown – IDF, Shin Bet and Border Police have effectively encircled the Tubas–Tammun area, raiding over 220 sites and detaining local figures including Tammun's mayor under the banner of "counterterror infrastructure." **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

REGIONAL AXIS (IRAN, HOUTHIS, MILITIAS)

Houthis Edge Closer to the Golan – Israel's defense minister warns that forces in Syria, including Houthi elements already flagged by intel desks, are "considering invading Golan towns." **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

DIPLOMATIC & LEGAL

Australia Moves Against the IRGC – Canberra announced it will classify Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a "state-sponsored terror organization,"

tightening legal and financial constraints on Tehran's main export arm. The more US-aligned states criminalize the IRGC, the harder it becomes for Europe to pretend its trade with Iran is anything but oxygen for the axis.

Hill to ICC: Touch Allies, Lose Money – Senator Ted Budd's American Allies Protection Act would cut federal grants for four years to any state or city that tries to enforce ICC warrants against U.S. allies like Israel.

HOME FRONT & POLITICS

National Transport System Hijacked Over Loudspeakers – Arab or Iranian hackers briefly took over electronic bus stops and PA systems, blasting Arabic messages across Israel's public-transport network. It's a low-grade cyber jab, but it shows how easily the axis can rattle civilian nerves and why critical infrastructure has to be treated like part of the same battlespace as Rafah and Har Dov.

Missile Victims Stuck Between Tax Man and City Hall – Residents of buildings hit by Iranian missiles are mired in a jurisdictional fight between municipalities and the Tax Authority, freezing repairs and leaving families in limbo a year after the attack. If the state doesn't sort this quickly, it won't just be a human disgrace—it will undermine deterrence by proving Tehran can knock Israelis out of their homes longer than Jerusalem can get them back in.

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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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