



Forensic intelligence for those who act.

READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

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Israel buys hours as Tehran threatens and Hamas measures response.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVER

THE BOTTOM LINE Once “genocide” becomes a domestic litmus test, the legal-industrial complex follows: petitions, complaints, border screening, doxxing-adjacent rhetoric, and “just asking questions” investigations that target Israelis and Jews as a class. None of this requires a conviction to work... the punishment is the process—travel anxiety, professional risk, reputational smearing, and the slow normalization of “IDF veteran” as presumptive criminal status in Western bureaucracies. Israel should treat it as an operational front: end intelligence sharing when governments cannot be trusted to act as allies, expand travel advisories and legal support structures for reserve soldiers, and force reciprocity costs when democratic states flirt with selective prosecutions of Jews in uniform. Diaspora leadership should stop begging for statements and start demanding enforcement. Neither intimidation nor incitement at synagogues and campuses are speech. They’re pre-attack permission structures.

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Flash Brief

- **Iran Clock:** Trump weighs action as Tehran seeks talks and threatens U.S. bases and Israel.
- **Gaza Line:** Armed approaches and theft attempts near the Yellow Line trigger airstrikes and arrests.
- **Lebanon:** IDF kills Hezbollah rebuild operative near Bint Jbeil as Beirut promises weapons collection in phases.
- **Judea & Samaria:** Forces capture Nablus shooter within 24 hours and detain accomplices.
- **Courts:** Coalition readies plenum declaration to ignore Basic Law rulings as testimony pauses mid-session.
- **Draft:** Extremists storm Hasmonean Brigade parents' event in Bnei Brak; police restore order.
- **Home Front:** Red wind warning and flood risk push agencies to prep road closures and hospital shift plans.

The War Today

Gaza's "Ceasefire" Becomes A Reconnaissance Zone And A Governance Costume

Along the Yellow Line—the demarcation Israel set for Phase One, leaving the IDF controlling roughly half the Strip—multiple approach and crossing incidents continued, including armed figures moving toward forces and getting removed as immediate threats. Commanders are warning that Hamas is undeterred from exploiting the lull to build attack capacity. Including civilian-dressed scouts testing response times and routes through rubble folds, while operatives observe from distance and catalogue patterns. The environment is being made worse—not better—by Israel's reliance on civilian contractors in proximity to outposts and sensitive stockpiles, increasing misidentification risk and creating an obvious operational-security problem in a theater built around disguise and deception. Meanwhile, the physical work continues. Hundreds to thousands of structures have reportedly been demolished since the ceasefire began—mostly within the Yellow Line—some demolitions occurring beyond the line via air-delivered munitions rather than ground reentry. Forces assess tunnel discovery and neutralization in the IDF-controlled half could take *years*, with concerns that some tunnels may run beneath current outposts—meaning a premature Phase B pullback could hand Hamas intact subterranean lanes. Politically, Hamas is pushing “next stage” talk in Cairo—stabilize the ceasefire, move forward, form an “experts committee” to oversee Gaza's affairs—while simultaneously delaying its own leadership elections amid internal divisions and committee rule from abroad. Inside Gaza, the picture is uglier still. Armed anti-Hamas groups operating in Israeli-controlled zones are openly executing Hamas officials (including a senior police investigations figure near Khan Yunis), with Hamas blaming “agents”

and launching manhunts—another sign that the Strip’s internal order is breaking into clan-on-regime violence. And hovering over all of this is the internationalization fantasy: states are floating participation in a future “stabilization force,” including candidates with documented hostility to Israel.

■ ASSESSMENT

Gaza is reloading—while everyone who wants to stop thinking about the war tries to rename reloading as “governance.” The Yellow Line shows where Israel doesn’t physically control, Hamas regrows. The real question is timing—does Israel finish the subterranean job before politics forces a pullback that hands Hamas survivable infrastructure? Add the rise of anti-Hamas militias, and you get an unstable internal chessboard: useful pressure on Hamas, yes, but also a recipe for fragmentation that outsiders will blame on Israel the moment it inconveniences their “postwar” powerpoints.

Iran’s Blackout Compresses The Strike Window As Israel Hardens For Spillover

Iran’s internal crackdown has crossed into an external decision cycle. A communications blackout now stretching past four days, heavy interference with satellite internet, fewer videos leaking out, and a political narrative that blames “foreign interference” while security organs escalate repression. Washington has moved from generic warnings to explicit red-line signaling tied to protest killings, confirmed contacts with opposition figures, and open discussion of “very strong options” that could land even before any proposed meeting with Iranian officials. Tehran, for its part, is running its classic survival play: brutally crack down on any unrest, reach out for talks to buy time, threaten regional retaliation to raise the cost of action, and posture for escalation while insisting everything is “under control.” Tehran’s leadership has explicitly warned that U.S. bases and Israel are targets. Washington answered that strikes on American assets would trigger unprecedented response. Reporting also indicates advanced military option planning, visible U.S. surveillance presence in the Gulf corridor, and possible reinforcement moves. Israel has moved into a higher defensive posture: raised aviation alert, tightened contingency planning, and further public guidance. Multiple Western governments escalated travel advisories from “don’t go” to “leave now,” and more airlines suspended Iranian routes.

ASSESSMENT

This is what a regime looks like when it fears sunlight more than sanctions: it turns off the internet, shoots in the dark, and then tries to frighten outsiders into waiting until the killing is finished. Less visibility means unchecked repression, fewer coordination channels for protesters, and more incentive for Tehran to export fear to change the subject. Trump’s signaling narrows Tehran’s room to maneuver, but it also raises the misread risk: when both sides think the other might move first, the “deterrence conversation” becomes a launch sequence. Israel’s posture—tight defense, readiness for surprise, coordination with Washington without outsourcing judgment—is the only way to operate inside that window.

Inside Israel

Coalition Prepares To Override Court As Trial Tensions Spike

The justice minister laid out a posture of open institutional confrontation—preparedness to cripple Supreme Court function by waiting out appointments, defying rulings, and advancing steps that would treat court decisions as void, while also moving disciplinary proceedings against the current court president. The coalition is preparing a plenum declaration stating that any Supreme Court ruling striking down the Basic Law amendment tied to the reasonableness clause—and related orders on the amended Judicial Selection Committee framework—will be treated as “null and void,” explicitly arguing the court lacks authority over Basic Laws. On the law-enforcement side, the Knesset advanced a structural change with a first-reading approval to separate the Police Internal Investigations unit from the State Prosecutor’s Office into an independent body within the justice ministry—financial and administrative independence, leadership chosen by a professional committee, a new retired-judge role to adjudicate disputes, and authority to file indictments in cases it investigates. Running parallel, the prime minister’s corruption trial remains a live stressor. Testimony in the most serious case was cut short after a sealed envelope was delivered mid-session and the judges agreed to end early without public explanation. Prosecutors continued pressing on the alleged pattern of intermediaries used to influence media coverage and the defense kept attacking investigative gaps.

ASSESSMENT

This is no longer “reform versus status quo.” If the coalition wants to rebalance the judiciary, it should do it responsibly with clean legislation, broad legitimacy, and a timetable that doesn’t require lighting a constitutional bonfire mid-war. If it wants a confrontation, it now has the opening script: declare the court irrelevant, dare it to respond, and let the public absorb the shock when enforcement agencies start choosing which branch they obey.

Hasmonean Brigade Meets Mob Violence As Manpower Crisis Hardens

The manpower crisis is turning into street violence aimed directly at the people trying to fix it. A conference in Bnei Brak for parents of recruits to the new ultra-Orthodox brigade was violently disrupted when extremist protesters broke into the event, clashed with soldiers and commanders, and forced police to restore order. At least two soldiers were injured and the brigade commander required escort to safety. The chief of staff and defense minister both drew a hard line publicly—violence against soldiers is a red line—and framed the brigade as a model of integration at a moment when regular and reserve forces are worn down. This comes amid escalating anti-draft unrest across the country, including repeated clashes with police. The attorney general has now told the High Court the government is actively violating that its ruling requiring equality in conscription with the Court’s 45-day deadline to produce

an effective, equitable enforcement policy lapsed with no operative instructions, no appointed coordinating authority, and no meaningful implementation. At the same time, the IDF is trying to keep it together. Its new 2026–2030 multi-year plan is structured around war readiness, return to fitness after two years of fighting, and force-building for future threats. It emphasizes the “people” pillar—conscripts, career soldiers, reservists—alongside border defense, air and missile defense, long-range threats with Iran as the central enemy, and a push into digital/AI, robotics, and space as operational domains.

ASSESSMENT

The IDF is planning for the next five years while the political system still can't bring itself to enforce next week. Israel can buy munitions and write beautiful multi-year plans—then bleed out slowly if it cannot enforce shared duty. The Hasmonean Brigade scene is the ugly—soldiers trying to carry the load, extremists trying to make participation a social crime, and politicians treating enforcement like optional therapy. This is not about “the Haredim” as a people but about whether Israel is a state where service is default or where the loudest bloc can extort exemptions.

Abbas Health Rumors, Shelter Readiness, And A Country On Alert

In the Knesset, ministers and lawmakers from the national camp convened a public “day after” conference aimed at forcing a long-term Gaza roadmap onto the agenda—security control, demilitarization, preventing terror resurgence, and even explicit discussion of encouraging emigration from Gaza—framed as the only way to convert battlefield gains into an enduring “victory picture.” The forum brought together lawmakers, veterans, Gaza-border residents, bereaved families, and hostage families, including the mother of Ran Gvili, ז”ל, and featured testimony from a former hostage describing captivity—turning policy talk into a domestic legitimacy exercise as much as a strategic one. In parallel, the Palestinian Authority leader underwent medical check-ups in Ramallah after reports of an emergency—officials insist the tests were routine and reassuring, but he is 90, in what is effectively the 22nd year of a four-year term, and the PA remains the default governing structure in parts of Judea and Samaria whether Israel likes it or not. On the home-front side, a significant winter system is arriving with unusually severe wind gusts along the coast, heavy rain and thunderstorms spreading from north to center. It brings high flash-flood risk in the Judean Desert and along the Dead Sea, potential urban flooding in multiple southern/coastal cities, snow on Hermon and the northern Golan, and likely road closures in the south and along Route 90.

ASSESSMENT

Gaza “day after” conferences are useful only if they translate into executable policy—budgets, authority, enforcement, and a single chain of command—because Gaza punishes slogans and rewards structure. Abbas’s hospital visit is another quiet fuse. Succession ambiguity in the PA doesn’t produce Scandinavian civics; it produces factional jockeying, armed men testing boundaries, and outside actors (read: Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and other regional elements) trying to buy influence in Judea and Samaria. Floods, wind, power lines, and closed arteries don’t care whether the threat is meteorological or ballistic—they care whether the state can keep services running, move responders fast, and communicate like adults.

Israel and the World

“Genocide” Becomes A Campaign Tool As Lawfare Hunts Israelis Abroad

In The Hague, the UN’s top court is beginning hearings on whether Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya, a case explicitly framed as a Genocide Convention test that could influence how genocide is defined in international law—an obvious downstream risk for the parallel case filed against Israel. In the U.S., the same word is now a primary-season shibboleth. Democratic candidates in deep-blue districts are being punished for refusing to say “genocide” fast enough, with at least one prominent California contender flipping to a full accusation after being jeered at a debate, and other Democrats shifting tone toward “investigations” and “unconscionable destruction” to survive intraparty pressure. That rhetorical shift doesn’t stay rhetorical. In Canada, a sitting MP has advanced a petition calling for investigations—and potential charges—against Canadian citizens and residents who served in the IDF—invoking universal-jurisdiction style war-crimes statutes and even pushing for border screening and warnings for returnees. In Europe, a “Palestinian” NGO has filed another “war crimes” complaint against an IDF veteran in Austria, claiming it can link the veteran to “systematic destruction” using satellite imagery. The organization boasts dozens of complaints across multiple countries and says it has forwarded large lists of soldiers to the ICC. A major public university in California suspended a professor for one academic quarter over a post that threatened “Zionist journalists” and referenced access to their addresses and children—yet kept the professor employed and apparently paid across a multi-year period in which she hasn’t taught, while defending the arrangement with broad talk about “research and service.” Put together, the system looks coordinated even when it isn’t. Vocabulary. Pressure in politics. Definitional pressure in courts. Procedural pressure at borders. Intimidation normalization in universities—all converging on a single point: making Jewish identity and Israeli service a liability category.

ASSESSMENT

Once “genocide” becomes a domestic litmus test, the legal-industrial complex follows: petitions, complaints, border screening, doxxing-adjacent rhetoric, and “just asking questions” investigations that target Israelis and Jews as a class. None of this requires a conviction to work... the punishment is the process—travel anxiety, professional risk, reputational smearing, and the slow normalization of “IDF veteran” as presumptive criminal status in Western bureaucracies. Israel should treat it as an operational front: end intelligence sharing when governments cannot be trusted to act as allies, expand travel advisories and legal support structures for reserve soldiers, and force reciprocity costs when democratic states flirt with selective prosecutions of Jews in uniform. Diaspora leadership should stop begging for statements and start demanding enforcement. Neither intimidation nor incitement at synagogues and campuses are speech. They’re pre-attack permission structures.

Briefly Noted

Culture, Religion & Society

- A Belgian city councilor from the Islamic Party publicly endorsed a long-term plan to turn Belgium into an Islamic state governed by Sharia, “even if it takes decades.” It’s a clear, hostile takeover and Belgium’s Jews get to live inside the pilot program.
- President Trump said there’s “no place” for antisemites in the Republican Party and that leaders should condemn figures who push Jew-hate. It’s the right sentence delivered, but it’s *really* late—useful mainly as a political boundary marker while the Jew haters keeps trying to launder themselves into “just another viewpoint.”

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- The European Parliament president announced a ban on all Iranian diplomatic staff and regime representatives from entering Parliament premises amid Tehran’s crackdown on protesters.
- The UAE restricted state funding for Emirati students attending UK universities, citing concerns that campuses have been radicalized by Islamist networks, after months of warnings to London. When a Gulf ally decides British universities are too extremist for its own kids, the UK’s “it’s just activism” routine officially becomes a really bad national-security joke.

Domestic & Law

- The military trial of IDF reservist Aviad Fria is set to begin January 19 on manslaughter charges for the mistaken killing of Yuval Kestelman during a Jerusalem terror attack, after prosecutors rejected a reduced-plea route.

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

- **Shechem Shooter Grabbed Fast** — Security forces arrested Hamas operative Zaid Kharraz after the Nablus shooting that wounded an IDF soldier, along with suspects who helped him flee. Fast closures might deter cells, but they also invite copycat payback.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Bint Jbeil Rebuild Operator Hit** — The IDF eliminated a Hezbollah operative involved in reestablishing military infrastructure in southern Lebanon.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Khan Yunis UAV Strike Reported** — Gaza sources reported three killed in an Israeli UAV strike near Junction 17 in southern Khan Yunis.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Trump's 48-Hour Decision Window** — U.S. and Israeli channels signal a near-term decision point on Iran, with senior-level consultations tightening and public threat exchanges hardening. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Iran Blackout Passes 100 Hours** — Connectivity is near-flatline, Starlink interference is reportedly heavy, and fewer videos are emerging as protests appear to dip.
- **Carrier Talk And Hormuz ISR** — Reporting suggests a possible U.S. carrier deployment, alongside routine-but-timely maritime surveillance over Hormuz.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **UK Won't Designate IRGC** — London signaled it will not label the IRGC a terror organization despite mounting domestic pressure. That keeps the IRGC's network treated as "state business," which is how enemies buy time in Western courts and banks.

Home Front & Politics

- **Iranian SMS Intimidation Ping** — Israeli phones received another threatening set of messages attributed to Iranian cyber actors. It's psychological prep—soften nerves before any kinetic or proxy move.
- **Airports And Cabinet Readiness Tighten** — Israel raised aviation alert posture and restricted ministerial travel/availability as contingency planning intensifies.

The biggest things to keep watch over are Washington's decision on Iran and Hamas's attempt to trade "management" for space while keeping guns intact. Hezbollah will feel pressure to demonstrate relevance, and domestic actors will keep testing whether state capacity is negotiable in wartime.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Uriel Zehavi

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR · MITZPE INSTITUTE

Uriel Zehavi is the executive director of Mitzpe Institute, where he writes the daily Israel Brief and co-directs its Institutional Intelligence practice with Modi Zehavi. He is the author of four books from Mitzpe Press and advises Israeli and allied clients on strategic communications for Western audiences.



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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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