



Forensic intelligence for those who act.

READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

Sunday, February 1

Rafah runs “progress” while Hamas runs at troops (out of tunnels). Meanwhile Iran tries to tax the world through shipping lanes as the United States signals it may stop rehearsing.

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THE BOTTOM LINE The anti-Israel movement manufactures a worldview where Jews and the Jewish state are the master switch behind every grievance—immigration, policing, war, “globalists,” whatever is trending. That worldview turns violence into “resistance” and makes targets feel morally justified. The Biden plot shows the endpoint: a self-declared “Free Palestine” activist deciding assassination is civic duty, wrapped in the familiar blend of geopolitical inversion (defend Russia/China/Iran) and fantasies of violence against Israel. The synagogue threat is the downstream reality Jews actually live with. The “activism” stays online until someone picks up a phone, a gun, or something even worse. And yet society by-and-large treats it as “political speech” rather than terrorism.

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Flash Brief

- **Rafah Gate:** Crossing reopens under European supervision; Israeli security services screen names remotely; Hamas tunnel teams surface and scatter.
- **Gaza Contact Line:** Strikes hit commanders, launch sites, and workshops after armed operatives attempt to engage IDF troops.
- **Northern Front:** Hezbollah rebuild crews and engineering assets get targeted; drone smuggling tests a new lane.
- **Iran Window:** Hormuz live-fire begins as strike talk goes public and regional alert systems get tested.
- **Draft Math:** Haredi enlistment rises only where penalties are coercive enough; coalition moves to dilute enforcement fast.
- **Internal Security:** Black-flag march heads for Tel Aviv; roadblocks and Border Police surges ignite legal and political friction.
- **Diplomacy:** South Africa and Jerusalem trade expulsions; Turkey sells “conditional” ties while pitching uranium babysitting.

The War Today

Rafah Reopens Under Remote Screening As Hamas Tests The Line

Rafah Crossing reopened to pedestrian traffic under EUBAM supervision with Egypt submitting name lists about 24 hours in advance for Israel approval, and Israeli security authorities running a remote “stop/go” screening layer (though without a permanent on-site IDF presence). Initial throughput is expected at roughly 150–200 people per day, with operators running limited crossings first to rehearse procedures and verify the identification systems. The reopening landed amid a kinetic enforcement burst after Hamas violated the ceasefire yet again. Eight armed operatives were identified emerging from underground infrastructure in eastern Rafah, triggering air strikes that killed three, followed by ground searches that apprehended a key commander later identified as a mid-level commander in Hamas Eastern Rafah Battalion. The IDF and Shin Bet said they have struck four commanders and additional operatives across the Strip in response to the violation, alongside strikes on a weapons storage site, weapons manufacturing site, and two launch sites tied to Hamas in central Gaza. Separately, troops operating near the “Yellow Line” in central Gaza identified four armed terrorists approaching forces and directed an air strike to remove the immediate threat. Along the line, IDF forces operating east of the Yellow Line in the Khan Yunis area dismantled a hundreds-of-meters tunnel route containing three living quarters and an inventory that included roughly 45 grenades, 35 magazines, 10 rifles, RPG rockets and a launcher, around 10 explosive devices, and six tactical vests.

ASSESSMENT

*Hamas continues to use underground infrastructure as a mobility and surprise factory—daring Israel to absorb the political cost of stopping it. Yet, regardless of reality, the international community demands “progress.” Remote screening and EU-supervised operations can throttle flow, but they also re-create a familiar failure. The 150-200 people a day trial run is for a contest Israel keeps losing in the same way over and over—**process first, coercion later**. Later, historically, never arrives. This is part of the moderate-laundering mechanism: rename armed governance as “administration,” move bodies through “humanitarian corridors,” and treat anyone who insists on disarmament as the problem.*

Hezbollah Rebuild Nodes Get Hit While Tehran Takes Hormuz Hostage

Israel widened enforcement against Hezbollah rehabilitation activity in southern Lebanon, striking a terrorist in the Seddiqin area tied to attempts to reestablish infrastructure and expanding strikes to multiple Hezbollah sites and engineering assets—described as infrastructure and vehicles used to rebuild terror positions in areas—while additional IDF updates reported eliminations in the Markaba area connected to repeated violations of the ceasefire understandings. Israeli forces intercepted a **weapons-smuggling drone** crossing into Israeli territory carrying **three M-16 rifles**, and Border Police assault units operating in Judea and Samaria arrested an operative in the Tulkarm area identified as planning an imminent attack after surrounding his location and apprehending him while he attempted to flee. Above the tactical layer, the United States and Iran moved from quiet posture back to loud signaling. Israel’s chief of staff Eyal Zamir publicly said the U.S. will attack Iran, while U.S. military officials reportedly briefed a key regional ally that Donald Trump could authorize strikes this weekend, potentially as early as today. Trump added public language about a large naval armada moving toward Iran. Tehran answered with its senior officials claiming negotiations are “progressing.” Iran’s foreign minister warned of a “shocking, swift” counterstrike, and Iran declared EU militaries “terrorist groups” in response to Europe’s IRGC terrorist designation. Iran also announced a two-day live-fire naval exercise in the Strait of Hormuz beginning today. Marco Rubio revoked entry privileges for Iranian senior officials and family members, and Treasury actions sanctioned IRGC officials including intelligence leadership, an Iranian oligarch, and two London-based crypto exchanges alleged to be linked to the IRGC. The U.S. also approved major weapons packages for Israel (including Apache helicopters and tactical vehicles) and for Saudi Arabia. Emergency alert testing in Bahrain and heightened messaging around force positioning within Iranian missile range, indicates the region is tracking developments closely. Multiple simultaneous “explosions” inside Iran (in different areas) were publicly attributed by Iranian officials to “gas leaks.”

ASSESSMENT

*Israel is telling Hezbollah that “rebuilding” is not a postwar right—it’s an **actionable target set**, down to excavators and maintenance yards—unfortunately, Hezbollah doesn’t seem to be listening. On Iran, Tehran is doing what it always does when it fears a decision. Widen the target set. Spike insurance premiums. Force third parties to beg Washington to “avoid escalation.” All the while Iran keeps its nuclear program, its missile workshops, and its proxy franchises. The Hormuz live-fire exercise more like a **hostage note written in shipping schedules**. U.S. sanctions on IRGC-linked finance and crypto rails help, but the real question is whether Washington’s coercion becomes **capability removal** or mere theatrics. In the meantime, Israel’s northern enforcement and Judea-and-Samaria interdictions serve a single purpose: keep secondary theaters from becoming Tehran’s cheapest distraction fire.*

Inside Israel

Draft Penalties Lift Enlistment, Coalition Tries To Defang Them

New recruitment data shows Haredi enlistment is rising—but still nowhere near what the IDF needs. About 3,300 are expected this year. An improvement, to be sure. *If* the numbers reflect actual Haredim (previously, they have not been very accurate). The military baseline remains about 14,000 Haredi each year—meaning the “improvement” still amounts to a rounding error against manpower requirements. Assessments attribute the uptick to real repercussions for non-enlistment—while warning that the proposed draft framework’s effort to postpone or soften those consequences risks freezing or reversing the trend. Inside the Haredi political bloc, Netanyahu stands accused of repeated deception and marginalization—listing unmet promises on exemptions, yeshiva funding, teacher frameworks, and welfare commitments. Haredi leadership framed the current conscription crisis as political failure, not a court-driven inevitability, and confirmed contacts with opposition figures.

ASSESSMENT

The biggest reason enlistment has moved at all is because consequences finally landed. And the coalition’s instinct—immediately—has been to sand those consequences down until they stop working. The manpower gap doesn’t care about “community sensitivities,” and the serving public is done financing a model where one class bleeds and another class pretends to read. Bibi’s old Haredi management system—private assurances, budget glue, and quiet discipline—is fraying as the public watches more intently. When (“if”) the government punts or postpones enforcement again, enlistment momentum will collapse and public rage will spike, again.

Black Flags In Tel Aviv As Arab Crime Forces State-Level Choices

Arab community leadership is escalating the fight over organized crime. A so-called “Black Flag” march went from the Tel Aviv Museum to Habima Square, last night. It was explicitly aimed at forcing national attention after 25 homicides in roughly a month and 252 killings in 2025. The campaign is pulling in support from Jewish-led protest movements and civil-society groups, following the recent general strike and mass mobilization in the north—tens

of thousands marching in Sakhnin after an extortion-targeted businessman publicly shut his supermarket chain, a move that triggered copycat closures and daily protests demanding enforcement and gun seizures. As pressure mounts for the police to do more, police are hardening their tactic. In Lod, after finding and deactivating IEDs, police placed concrete roadblocks in two Arab neighborhoods—one reportedly sealed to the point of restricting entry/exit—prompting a civil-rights legal demand for immediate removal on grounds of lacking explicit authority and amounting to discriminatory collective punishment in a mixed city. Simultaneously, enforcement operations are intensifying in the south. A weekend sweep in Bedouin communities produced arrests for illegal weapons and violent offenses, seizure of M16 rifles, and detention of illegal residents from Judea and Samaria. Border Police are now slated to deploy into Be’er Sheva as part of an expanded anti-gang operation after identifying “spillover” crime patterns—with the operation described as resource-heavy and built for deterrence and faster response. Additional interdictions included recovery of stolen vehicles in Judea and Samaria-area operations and disruption of fraud targeting elderly Russian-speaking victims in Ashdod, alongside continued weapons-smuggling attempts intercepted at the border—including rifles moved by drone.

ASSESSMENT

Black flags in Tel Aviv because the state didn’t do the work earlier—disarm gangs, crush extortion economies, and prosecute networks instead of writing speeches about “community violence.” The public is right to demand results. The state is right to surge enforcement. But concrete barricades in Arab neighborhoods are the kind of blunt instrument that kill your optics. The government cannot fight organized crime with tactics that smell like segregation and still act surprised when trust collapses. The public expects intelligence-led dismantling. Take guns. Take illegally obtained money. Dismantle protection rackets. Make prison the default career outcome for gang leadership. If freedom of movement restrictions are necessary, they must be narrowly justified, legally anchored, and temporary. Politically, this also intersects with the broader repricing of Arab turnout and representation we’ve noted in the past few weeks. The more this looks like neglect or humiliation, the more it becomes a national coalition variable rather than a municipal policing problem.

Israel and the World

South Africa Fight Escalates, Turkey Floats “Conditional” Normalization While Everyone Chases Iran Leverage

South Africa declared Israel’s acting head of mission in Pretoria *persona non grata* and ordered him out within 72 hours, citing alleged “abuse of diplomatic privileges,” violations of diplomatic norms, and political friction tied to Israeli diplomatic activity and messaging. Israel mirrored the escalation by declaring South Africa’s chargé d’affaires in Israel *persona non grata*—likewise ordering him to depart within 72 hours—locking the relationship into a downgraded, hostile holding pattern. Turkey’s foreign minister publicly signaled that Ankara’s rupture with Israel is “conditional,” claiming trade can resume

once the Gaza war ends and humanitarian aid is permitted—while continuing to brand Israel’s campaign as genocidal and positioning Turkey inside Gaza’s postwar oversight machinery. As the Iran decision window tightens, Turkey also floated a mediation concept centered on transferring Iran’s enriched uranium to Turkish custody—a proposal designed to buy Tehran time and buy Ankara relevance.

ASSESSMENT

South Africa isn’t “defending diplomatic norms”—a better read of the situation is that it’s expanding its lawfare posture into day-to-day sabotage (while it pretends the Vienna Convention is a shield against consequences). Israel’s retaliatory expulsion is correct. Stop allowing a one-way diplomatic abuse pipeline where Israel absorbs blows for the privilege of being lectured. Turkey’s “conditional normalization”... more extortion dressed up as pragmatism, the classic Ankara move. The uranium-transfer idea is worse.

MSF Rejects Vetting As Gaza Aid Becomes A Battlespace Tool

Médecins Sans Frontières (or Doctors Without Borders), a major international medical NGO, announced it will no longer provide employee lists demanded under Israel’s updated operating regulations for Gaza and Judea and Samaria, reversing a position it had accepted last week. Claiming it cannot secure assurances that staff data will be used only for administrative purposes or that its teams will remain safe. The decision lands as Israel has ordered dozens of international organizations to comply with new rules or cease activity. This as the NGO has maintaining ties to designated terror groups and has some of its personnel linked to terror activity and public support for terror organizations. In a similar lane, Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, a Gaza hospital director, has been identified as a Hamas Colonel. Terror infrastructure operated from his hospital during the war—with reporting noting he was detained and later released—which didn’t stop him from authoring high-profile attacks on Israel in the op-ed pages of the *New York Times*. Separately, a seized internal document describing pre-October 7 exchanges between Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad records Hamas officials complaining that PIJ rockets repeatedly fell short and killed Gaza civilians; PIJ leadership is described as acknowledging defective rockets—linked to IRGC-supplied designs—and treating large-scale “friendly fire” civilian deaths as an acceptable cost.

ASSESSMENT

This is what happens when the West tries to run a counterterror war as a branding exercise. The “humanitarian space” becomes an unpoliced operating environment that terror groups exploit, and NGOs then demand immunity from the very vetting designed to stop exploitation. If an organization refuses basic administrative transparency while insisting it must operate inside an active terror theater, it is not claiming neutrality. Hamas doesn’t merely hide among civilians—it builds command-and-control into civilian institutions and exports “credible spokespeople” to launder the story. And the rocket document punctures the performative innocence that international coverage often grants Palestinian armed groups. They knew their rockets killed Gazans. They kept firing the defective rockets from dense areas anyway. Oversight is the minimum price of operating in a jihadist ecosystem that weaponizes every soft institution it can collaborate with or infect.

“Free Palestine” Violence in America

US federal investigators arrested an Alabama man for an alleged 2024 attempt to assassinate then-president Joe Biden at the Atlanta presidential debate—a plot he attributed to Gaza imagery and framed in explicitly anti-Israel terms. Prosecutors say he brought a handgun to Atlanta but failed to access the event, later disclosed the attempt to classmates in 2025, and left a manifesto praising adversaries of the West while threatening Tel Aviv and invoking “Free Palestine.” Investigators recovered the text messages from his phone and charged him as the case expands. In parallel, a burst of left-wing social media agitation attempted to tie unrest and controversial shootings tied to immigration enforcement in Minneapolis to Israel, pushing baseless claims that Israeli agencies trained or infiltrated US federal enforcement and that Israeli-linked tactics or personnel drove domestic operations. In Florida, a man was arrested after calling in a bomb threat to a Reform synagogue in Ormond Beach— forcing a lockdown of the synagogue’s elementary school and a police search.

ASSESSMENT

The anti-Israel movement manufactures a worldview where Jews and the Jewish state are the master switch behind every grievance—immigration, policing, war, “globalists,” whatever is trending. That worldview turns violence into “resistance” and makes targets feel morally justified. The Biden plot shows the endpoint: a self-declared “Free Palestine” activist deciding assassination is civic duty, wrapped in the familiar blend of geopolitical inversion (defend Russia/China/Iran) and fantasies of violence against Israel. The synagogue threat is the downstream reality Jews actually live with. The “activism” stays online until someone picks up a phone, a gun, or something even worse. And yet society by-and-large treats it as “political speech” rather than terrorism.

Briefly Noted

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *The Jewish Chronicle*: More than 100 UK MPs and peers urged the government to “proscribe the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps ‘in its entirety’” and fast-track the law—yet, the government is practicing selective hearing.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Antonio Guterres warned member states the United Nations is heading toward “an ‘imminent financial collapse,’” with cash potentially running out by July as unpaid dues pile up.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Saudi Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman reportedly told US officials that skipping a strike would “embolden” Iran—days after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates publicly denied their airspace or territory for any attack. The Gulf wants Washington to swing the hammer without risking any blowback themselves.

Frontline & Security

- *Times of Israel*: Satellite imagery shows new roofs over damaged structures at Natanz and Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center, likely shielding salvage work after the Israel–US strikes while inspectors remain locked out. Tehran is literally roofing the rubble—you can safely assume it’s hunting for what survived.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *JFeed*: A Jewish passenger filed a complaint after an American Airlines flight attendant wore a keffiyeh on a LaGuardia–Miami flight. The airline says it’s investigating because it’s not part of the “approved uniform.”

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

- **IDF-uniform impersonation lane** — Police caught a car thief in Silwad wearing IDF uniform items—in a copycat effort of a previous extortion and theft racket.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Suwayda Druze flags defiance** — Pro-Israel Druze demonstrations in Suwayda are a red rag for Damascus and Ankara’s Syria project. If local forces crack down, Israel will get dragged into “protection” signaling.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Rafah lists become battlefield** — Rafah’s reopening is capped and list-based, with Israel approving names remotely. Hamas will push “medical” and “family” exceptions to launder its terror cadres. The first denial will be marketed as “collective punishment.” **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Hormuz drill turns into tripwire** — The IRGC’s two-day live-fire exercise started today in the Strait of Hormuz. One “warning shot,” radar misread, or navigation incident could trigger U.S. fire before diplomats finish clearing their throats.
- **Bushehr quake rumor bait** — A 5.3 quake near the Bushehr reactor is being treated as “proof” of sabotage by those selling panic. Watch for fake radiation claims, attribution games, and pretext-setting for retaliation or internal crackdown.
- **Iraq militias rehearse entry** — Saraya Awliya al-Dam is advertising underground missile logistics and promising to aid Iran if the U.S. strikes.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Saudi red-line messages** — Reports say Riyadh warned Tehran it won't stay quiet if U.S. bases on Saudi soil are hit, while still denying its airspace for strikes.

Home Front & Politics

- **Krayot test noise** — Rafael plans a controlled test at the David Institute site in the Krayot area.

Rafah's re-opening will be gamed. In the north, rebuild activity is still being treated like attack prep. Inside Israel, the draft issue festers as exemptions and excuses stack up. Coming up: A staged Rafah denial incident to generate international pressure.

— *Uri Zehavi · Intelligence Editor*

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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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