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February 12, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Thursday, February 12

Negotiations ongoing while the strike machinery gets real instructions. Gaza “disarmament” talk expands as Hamas keeps the only credential that matters: guns.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE The UN’s behavior is institutional habit: congratulate the regime, platform the regime, then issue statements about “human rights” as if the microphone isn’t part of the weapon system. The NGO episode is useful precisely because it’s rare: even in the rights-industry, there is a point where stretching international criminal law into hereditary political claims becomes too ridiculous to sign. Israel should exploit that crack aggressively—because every time the lawfare machine is forced to admit a boundary, it becomes harder to sell the next escalation as “consensus.”

CLASSIFICATION

Reader Edition

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WASHINGTON's lips move while its arms relocate. Gaza offered "phased" fantasies while Hamas keeps rifles. Israel re-learns that borders and internal discipline are both live-fire problems. The Iran issue remains a scope fight, but the meeting leaves fingerprints: carriers, basing shifts, and explicit retaliation threats.

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Flash Brief

- **Iran:** Trump and Netanyahu keep talks running; Pentagon readies a second carrier; Tehran threatens U.S. bases. *See The War Today.*
- **Syria Footprint:** U.S. troops leave Al-Tanf (Syria) and relocate to Jordan, reshaping the corridor. *See The War Today.*
- **Gaza Options:** Israeli officials debate a full re-entry while Hamas cash strain triggers weapon sales and policing. *See The War Today.*
- **Sinai Border:** Pickup trucks approach near Shlomit again; IDF deploys armor and air surveillance, prepares warning fire. *See The War Today.*
- **Judea & Samaria:** Menashe raids net Hamas/PIJ suspects, seize cash, AK-47 and M4 parts, and stolen vehicles. *See The War Today.*
- **OPSEC Breach:** Reservist and civilian face indictments for using classified data to bet on Polymarket. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Defense Readiness:** David's Sling completes testing; IDF runs Golan defense drill and an Eilat-area exercise. *See Inside Israel.*

Below: how the Washington meeting narrows Iran's next moves, what Gaza "disarmament" theater actually leaves standing, and where Israel's own discipline creates openings.

SERIOUS actors are preparing for force while pretending the paperwork is the main event. Gaza's foreign "supervision" concept is still built to manage headlines, not remove an armed rule. And at home, the Polymarket case is a reminder that enemies love a leaky ship—especially when we sell them the schedule.

The War Today

Trump Keeps Diplomacy On, While The Strike Posture Quietly Thickens

The Netanyahu-Trump meeting ended with Trump publicly insisting negotiations with Iran continue and stressing no "definitive" agreements were reached beyond keeping the channel alive—paired with a blunt reminder of past U.S. strikes ("Midnight Hammer") if Iran walks away again. Netanyahu used the session to press Israel's red lines and, explicitly, to keep Iran's ballistic-missile program inside the framework if talks collapse, while protecting Israel's freedom of action. The U.S. defense posture moved from "option" to "queued" as the Pentagon instructed a second carrier strike group to prepare for Middle East deployment—with arrival potentially within roughly two weeks. For its part, Iran's security leadership warned again that any U.S. attack will trigger strikes on American bases in the region. Turkey publicly tried to box the talks into "nuclear-only," warning that adding missiles risks regional war. Separately, U.S. forces reportedly withdrew from the Al-Tanf

base in eastern Syria and relocated to Jordan, tightening the regional basing geometry as deterrence messaging hardens.

ASSESSMENT

This is familiar choreography. Keep the negotiation door open for legitimacy and stack forces for credibility... in the hope Iran flinches before anyone has to prove they meant it. The carrier order is a real signal—hardware doesn't "prepare" as a hobby—while Trump's public line ("talks must continue") is the political cover to say later, "we tried." Netanyahu's core fight here is scope: if missiles are treated as "too escalatory," then Tehran keeps the only instrument that really matters to it. Turkey's intervention is an attempt at laundering Iran's survivability doctrine into Western caution.

Targeted Kill-Chains Continue As Washington Shops For A Freeze

Israel eliminated Basam Hashem al-Fatah Himouni—released in the Shalit deal and deported to Gaza—who returned to operational terrorism and, during the war, was involved in producing and planting explosive devices against IDF forces. The strike, in some ways, is a long-delayed closure for the 2004 Be'er Sheva bus bombings that killed 16 Israelis. Washington's Gaza lane is drifting alarmingly further into managed optics territory. Reports describe a phased "disarmament" concept focused on heavy weapons first (rockets/RPGs) while leaving Hamas with small arms—alongside the expected arrival of foreign peacekeepers marketed as a "paradigm change," and a political incentive to claim "progress" by early —and then argue that a major Israeli ground return is unnecessary, especially as Israel approaches an election calendar. Meanwhile, inside Gaza, financial strain is reportedly biting hard enough that some Hamas operatives have missed salaries and are allegedly selling weapons or equipment to feed families (isolated rather than systematic), with Hamas-linked elements also moving to confiscate weapons found in civilian hands.

ASSESSMENT

"Heavy weapons first" sounds serious until you remember Hamas can run Gaza with rifles, intimidation, and a few photographed handovers—especially if foreign forces arrive with soft rules of engagement and a strong allergy to confronting Hamas. The weapon-selling chatter is useful only if Israel treats it like an intelligence and coercion opening, not as evidence Hamas is collapsing. It's not. A cash crisis can fracture discipline, but it can also flood Gaza with untracked arms and create freelance gunmen who are harder to deter than a chain of command.

Israel Hardens Perimeter Readiness As Internal OPSEC Frays

For the second time in 24 hours, white pickup trucks approached the Egyptian side of the border roughly 100 meters from the Israeli community of Shlomit, triggering rapid IDF deployment (including armor and aerial surveillance) and preparations for warning fire. Egypt described the individuals as permitted locals/tourists. In Judea and Samaria, a planned combined ramming-and-stabbing attack at the Hizma checkpoint was foiled after the suspect was arrested following a traffic accident. Investigators say he had been planning for months and had knives, military clothing, and fake plates, with a

search of his home turning up incitement materials and terror paraphernalia. Separately, security forces conducted a wide counterterror sweep in the Menashe Regional Brigade area across a dozen locations, detaining suspects tied to Hamas/Islamic Jihad, seizing terror funds and multiple firearms (including an M4 and AK-47), and dismantling illegal structures while confiscating dozens of stolen vehicles. The IDF ran defensive readiness exercises in frontline northern communities (including brigade-level drills integrating civilian security teams), and Israel advanced air-defense readiness with complex operational testing for David's Sling across multi-threat scenarios.

ASSESSMENT

The IDF's drills and air-defense upgrades are right on target—train like the breach will happen, test like saturation is coming—but Shlomit reveals deterrence is visual, and public confidence is brittle. When locals see a rehearsal pattern and hear “no threat,” they don't feel reassured.

Inside Israel

Draft Exemption Brinkmanship Collides With IDF Manpower Expansion

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir used the launch of the new 38th Division to announce a structural rebuild aimed at multi-front war: consolidating formerly separate training frameworks into a wartime maneuver formation, expanding ground combat mass, and even dissolving a decades-old General Staff corps as part of a broader reorganization. He also argued the IDF must significantly increase the number of combat soldiers—men and women—because the last two years proved the reserves are the backbone and the standing army must grow to give them breathing room. Israel's politics are racing in the opposite direction: coalition lawmakers continue advancing a draft-exemption framework for large portions of the ultra-Orthodox public as Haredi street networks organize rapid-response hotlines to mobilize protests when draft dodgers are detained, while reservist-led equality groups threaten disruptive highway actions (“no equality, no routine”). At the same time, the Knesset is grinding through a bill to create the October 7 investigative body. The cultural layer keeps rubbing salt into the same wound: a senior minister's public language minimizing “massacre” framing ignited backlash, adding more gasoline to an already weaponized accountability arena. Separately, ministers are set to vote on legislation to designate Qatar an enemy state—bringing the “we fund Hamas but please treat us as neutral” farce into formal statutory language.

ASSESSMENT

Israel is trying to do two mutually exclusive things: build a bigger army while legislating a smaller obligation to serve. Zamir is describing force design in wartime terms—divisions that can maneuver deep, not committees that can issue PDFs—and he's right. Then the coalition turns around and treats universal service like a bargaining chip. That contradiction cashes out in reserve attrition, recruiting cynicism, and the quiet erosion of "why should my kid go?" legitimacy. The Haredi political leadership are turning draft enforcement into a riot trigger and daring the state to blink. Meanwhile, the Oct. 7 inquiry architecture fight is not an argument about truth—it's an argument about who gets to write the indictment. If the investigation becomes a political weapon (or a judicial cudgel), it produces maximum bitterness and minimum operational repair. Israel doesn't need a sanctimonious tribunal—it needs accountability and fixes that survive elections.

Prediction-Market Leak Case Exposes New Front In IDF Discipline

Authorities indicted an IDF reservist and a civilian for severe security offenses after an investigation found classified military information was used to place bets on a prediction market about military operations. The case includes bribery and obstruction allegations, multiple suspects. The IDF stresses no operational harm was caused while still labeling it a red-line ethical failure. In parallel, Israel completed a series of complex operational test scenarios for David's Sling—designed to intercept rockets, missiles, cruise missiles, aircraft, and UAVs—explicitly incorporating lessons from the June 2025 Iran war and aiming to improve performance against simultaneous and evolving threat mixes. The tests also underline cost and capacity logic in layered air defense, where David's Sling shots are materially cheaper than top-tier interceptors. On the civil-security side, the national security minister formally recognized YATAR as an official national emergency response organization for the first time in years, expanding the standing role of an all-volunteer rapid-response unit built around ATV mobility for hard-to-reach terrain and time-sensitive counterterrorism, infiltration-prevention, and rescue support in coordination with security forces.

ASSESSMENT

When a reservist can monetize classified knowledge in public markets, then the adversary doesn't need a spy—it just needs a browser, a wallet, and patience. War isn't a sport, and "no operational harm" is the kind of comfort phrase you say right before you discover the harm was cumulative and second-order. In the same window, David's Sling testing and the formalization of fast volunteer response units reflect a state that understands modern attack patterns: high volume, mixed vectors, short warning time, and a home front that must keep functioning under impact. Air defense buys time but not complacency.

Ashdod Refinery Deaths Spotlight Industrial Safety And Regulatory Neglect

Two workers died after losing consciousness at an Ashdod-area refinery facility, with emergency teams finding them unresponsive and unable to revive them. Early indications pointed to oxygen deprivation inside the work environment, with initial suspicions ranging from defective protective suits to a hazardous-materials-related incident. Police opened an investigation while

stressing there was no danger to the public outside the facility. One victim was identified as Nitzan Goichman, 39, a mother of three.

ASSESSMENT

Industrial facilities are national infrastructure and they need standards, enforcement, and consequences that make corner-cutting professionally suicidal. Every preventable death in a strategic facility is also a legitimacy leak: the public hears “no danger to the public” and translates it into “only the workers pay.” In a country already asking more from fewer—more reserve rotations, more endurance, more resilience—the state does not get to be casual about basic safety competence.

Israel and the World

Boycott Culture Moves From Hashtags To Clipboards

In Johannesburg, a prestigious girls’ school abruptly pulled out of a scheduled tennis match against a Jewish school after parents reportedly objected to playing “a Jewish school,” then cycled through shifting explanations (“academic commitments,” then “geography workshops”) while later claiming it only sought a postponement to address student “reservations,” apologizing only for “miscommunication.” In Brighton, an “apartheid-free zone” campaign dispatched multiple door-knocking teams with clipboards and address checklists to secure signatures pledging to boycott Israeli products—explicitly framing Israel as “genocidal,” touting dozens of pledges, and positioning the list as leverage to pressure local businesses. In Australia, protests against President Isaac Herzog’s visit escalated (in a country still processing the Bondi Beach Hanukkah massacre)—an illustration of how “pro-Palestinian” mobilization treats even Jewish mourning and solidarity visits as legitimate targets. In the U.S., a new governance-focused report on the University of California system argued the hostile campus environment is being driven not just by students but by faculty and departments using institutional platforms to normalize boycotts and anti-Israel programming—citing dramatic multi-year spikes in anti-Jewish incidents and frequent faculty involvement as enablers or defenders. The global social work federation will vote February 18 on suspending or expelling Israel’s social workers’ union over claims tied to wartime “complicity,” a move supporters describe as a targeted political purge. Counter-pressure is emerging inside academia: a major London university hosted what appears to be the first on-campus screening of the IDF’s 47-minute raw October 7 footage (under heavy security, of course), while Yale appointed its first scholar-in-residence for an antisemitism studies program and scheduled a semester of public events.

ASSESSMENT

A school sports fixture becomes a values test. A neighborhood becomes a mapped compliance zone. A university's "shared governance" becomes a permission slip for faculty to turn classrooms into political engines. A global professional body floats expulsion as moral theater. Because Israel is the only country expected to fight with one hand tied and its identity erased. The point is to identify, isolate, and discipline—quietly enough to evade accountability, loudly enough to intimidate. The partial pushback—screening raw October 7 evidence on campus, building a serious antisemitism studies program—matters because it restores friction: reality is harder to boycott than a slogan. If Jews and pro-Israel allies treat this as "messaging," they'll lose to the bureaucrats. The response has to be enforcement and governance—rules applied, harassment defined as harassment, professional bodies challenged on selective prosecution, and universities forced to separate scholarship from activism-as-curriculum.

Rights-Language Hits A Wall, While Tehran Protects Missiles

The international "human rights" ecosystem showed both its usual instincts and a rare limit case at the same time. Human Rights Watch, a prominent NGO, reportedly drafted a new document attempting to reclassify Israel's denial of an inherited "right of return" for third- and fourth-generation descendants as a crime against humanity—the organization refused to publish it, prompting the authors' resignations and a blunt public rebuke from a former executive who called the report indefensible and an embarrassment—an internal rupture that signals even the most debased, Israel-obsessed machinery occasionally recognizes when legal language is being stretched into parody. The UN Secretary-General sent congratulations to Iran's president for the Islamic Revolution anniversary, prompting demands for transparency and outrage over the UN granting legitimacy to a regime associated with mass repression. UN Watch also highlighted that Iran's foreign minister is slated to address the UN Human Rights Council later this month and threatened to press Swiss authorities for arrest action if he arrives.

ASSESSMENT

The UN's behavior is institutional habit: congratulate the regime, platform the regime, then issue statements about "human rights" as if the microphone isn't part of the weapon system. The NGO episode is useful precisely because it's rare: even in the rights-industry, there is a point where stretching international criminal law into hereditary political claims becomes too ridiculous to sign. Israel should exploit that crack aggressively—because every time the lawfare machine is forced to admit a boundary, it becomes harder to sell the next escalation as "consensus."

Briefly Noted

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- **Jerusalem Post:** Trump said U.S.–Iran nuclear talks will continue after a three-hour White House meeting with Netanyahu, who presented intelligence on Iran's buildup and pushed that any strike must also hit the ballistic-missile program. Washington is keeping the "deal" script while moving

hardware into theater, and Israel is making sure the target list doesn't stop at centrifuges.

- **Jerusalem Post:** Colombian President Gustavo Petro said his helicopter diverted and spent hours over open sea after security concerns blocked a landing in Córdoba, calling it a foiled assassination attempt tied to cartel-linked threats. A state that can't reliably secure its own president is a state cartels can bargain with—warping elections, governance, and any serious coordination with the U.S. and allies.

Frontline & Security

- **Globes:** Armenia unveiled “Dragonfly 3,” a loitering munition that closely resembles IAI's Harop, with Israeli industry sources suspecting the know-how reached Yerevan via India's “Make in India” transfer pressures. When Israeli tech is walking, exports become involuntary R&D grants—and Azerbaijan gets a new reason to glare at Jerusalem.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- **Jerusalem Post:** A review of 29 Iran-linked “dark” tankers found about half beyond the recommended 20-year service life, with multiple older very large crude carriers flagged as extreme spill risks, per a Guardian report. But by all means, Greta, should get on another Gaza-bound flotilla.

Culture, Religion & Society

- **Jewish Chronicle:** UK Jewish theatre is rolling out new productions and building support networks as creators report cancellations and “soft boycotts,” while the Troxy faces an Equality and Human Rights Commission assessment after discrimination complaints.
- **Algemeiner:** The Olympics' official store listed a “heritage” T-shirt commemorating the 1936 Berlin Games under Hitler, using period poster imagery, before the item showed as out of stock. Dressing Nazi-era propaganda theater up as nostalgia is a choice. A bad one. And it normalizes Jew-hate-adjacent iconography.

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

- **Lebanon handler lane stays live** — Shin Bet says it dismantled a Palestinian cell directed from Lebanon, tasked with documenting a Jewish community and moving into weapons training for an attack.
- **Menashe sweep hits cash + rifles** — IDF/ISA ran a 12-locality sweep in the Menashe sector, arresting Hamas/PIJ-linked suspects, seizing terror funds, and pulling weapons (including M4/AK platforms) alongside stolen-vehicle and illegal-entry lanes.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Al-Tanf exit rewires Syria map** — Security sources say U.S. forces withdrew from Al-Tanf and shifted into Jordan. A vacuum on that corridor invites militia “reconnaissance by inconvenience,” and Israel will have to decide whether it tolerates new traffic or starts cutting it down again.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **“Conquer Gaza” debate surfaces** — Israeli officials are openly debating whether a full re-entry is worth it. If that argument turns into policy, you’ll see pre-positioning, messaging discipline (well, some—it’s Israel after all), and a hard pivot from “managed disarmament” theater to “remove the gunmen” reality.
- **Sinai border gets twitchy again** — For a second day, pickup trucks approached near Shlomit, with armor and air surveillance deployed and warning-fire preparations underway while Egypt calls them locals/tourists.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Second carrier goes from theory to orders** — The Pentagon instructed a second carrier strike group to prepare for Middle East deployment, with arrival measured in weeks.
- **Executions claim turns into leverage war** — Israel Hayom claims Iran secretly executed thousands despite assurances; Tehran’s FM denies it and claims pardons instead.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Qatar “enemy state” vote queued** — Ministers are set to vote on legislation designating Qatar an enemy state. Expect immediate pressure from every mediation ecosystem that profits from Qatar’s “neutral broker” cosplay, plus a scramble to fence off Doha’s leverage channels before they’re formally poisoned.

Home Front & Politics

- **Prediction-market leak crackdown widens** — An IDF reservist and a civilian were indicted for allegedly using classified info to bet on Polymarket, with a gag order still blocking details.
- **Haredi combat unit milestone lands** — The Hashmonaim Brigade’s Yonatan Battalion completed its first battalion-level certification exercise in the Golan.

A second carrier order and a basing move are not rhetorical devices—they are planning receipts. Watch for Tehran to push retaliation threats into action around U.S. assets and for Gaza “re-entry” arguments to turn into practical steps.

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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