



Forensic intelligence for those who act.

READER EDITION

February 13, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Friday, February 13

Two carriers move while Tehran pours concrete, and Gaza's 'new governance' keeps a rifle in every office.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE This is the Western self-crippling pattern in miniature: tolerate intimidation until it becomes a cost center, then argue about whether tools for enforcement are “proportionate,” and in the same breath hand Israel a new legal noose because it refuses to keep subsidizing hostile infrastructure. Britain is discovering—late—that activists who feel immune don’t just chant. They break things. Paralyze roads. And turn defense supply chains into public sport. The court decision is going to be read by the public as a green light, because the key lesson extremists take from judicial nuance is always the same: the state is hesitant. Meanwhile, the UN is doing what it does: converting “international law” into a pressure instrument to protect a UN bureaucracy’s footprint, regardless of how badly that bureaucracy has been implicated in the ecosystem that produced October 7. Israel should force the argument onto sovereign control, facilities security, and the consequences of granting quasi-immunity to institutions that function as terror actors in a war zone. And when a Jewish kid gets jumped in a “blind spot” in Washington Heights, you don’t really need another reminder that the chant-to-clipboard-to-courtroom pipeline reliably ends with somebody feeling licensed to get physical.

CLASSIFICATION

Reader Edition

DISTRIBUTION

Open · Free to share with attribution

TODAY is a study in who's preparing for impact versus who's preparing for headlines. Washington is stacking real capability around Iran while trying to keep Israel on a leash. Gaza is being repackaged with contractors, committees, and "phased" surrender theater—while Hamas keeps whatever they want.

IN THIS EDITION

Flash Brief	4
The War Today	4
Contractors, Militias, And Peacekeepers Crowd Gaza While Hamas Refuses Surrender	4
From Jenin To The Gas Rigs, Israel Tightens The Perimeter	5
Trump Signals A One-Month Clock While Tehran Pours Concrete	6
Inside Israel	6
Levin Standoff Turns Reform Fight Into Criminal-Justice Breakdown	6
Police Crackdowns Expand As Top Brass Face Obstruction Charges	7
Local Governments Fill Shabbat Mobility Gap While Flights Stay Expensive	8
Israel and the World	8
Capitol Hill's Israel Consensus Faces Primary Season Stress Test	8
Britain's Court-Activist Feedback Loop Weakens Enforcement And Targets Israel	9
Briefly Noted	10
Frontline & Security	10
Culture, Religion & Society	10
Diplomacy & Geopolitics	10
Developments to Watch	10
Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)	10
Gaza & Southern Theater	10
Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)	11
Diplomatic & Legal	11
Home Front & Politics	11

Flash Brief

- **Iran Clock:** USS Gerald R. Ford heads east as Trump sets a one-month deal window. See Israel and the World.
- **Natanz Worksite:** Satellite imagery shows intensified construction at the Pickaxe Mountain tunnel complex. See Israel and the World.
- **Gaza Contact:** IAF strikes a structure east of the Yellow Line after two terrorists enter. See The War Today.
- **Northern Border:** IDF eliminates a Hezbollah operative rebuilding infrastructure near At-Tiri. See Northern Front.
- **Jenin Arrest:** Yamam and ISA capture Muhammad Zidan, tied to financing and advancing terror activity. See The War Today.
- **Courts Crisis:** High Court warns judge shortages force releases of violent defendants to house arrest. See Inside Israel.
- **Mobility Politics:** Municipal Shabbat route reaches Ben Gurion as Wizz Air basing gets approved. See Inside Israel.

Below: how Gaza’s “managed disarmament” is being sold, what the Iran carrier move enables, and where internal governance is breaking under load.

GAZA’S “transition” is being staffed like an NGO project while Hamas runs it like a police state. The Iran front is compressing into a decision chain—carriers, basing signals, and a regime digging in like it expects company.

The War Today

Contractors, Militias, And Peacekeepers Crowd Gaza While Hamas Refuses Surrender

Since the last brief, the IDF struck a structure east of the Yellow Line in northern Gaza after troops identified two terrorists entering it. So apparently, Hamas never got the ceasefire memo. On the political-security side of things, the U.S.-backed “Board of Peace” is openly shopping for coercion substitutes. Discussions are underway with a private security firm that previously operated around humanitarian sites, Indonesia is being floated as the first state contributor for an International Stabilization Force (with talk of up to 8,000 troops), and Gaza-based militias are messily asserting control at Rafah—interrogating and detaining returnees—inside a widening power vacuum that the technocratic committee still hasn’t filled. The “phased disarmament” concept being floated increasingly reads as heavy weapons first (rockets/RPGs) while leaving Hamas with small arms. Hamas leadership is answering with jihadist clarity—Osama Hamdan stated Hamas will not lay down arms until Israel is “eliminated,” with a “hudna” framed as a rebuild window toward a future armed “state.” Meanwhile, captured Hamas internal documents highlight how deep the aid-ecosystem penetration went. Hamas monitored and intimidated

NGO staff, tracked would-be whistleblowers, and sought to block testimony around the World Vision case tied to Mohammed al-Halabi—convicted in 2022 for diverting resources to Hamas, including materials linked to tunnel-building, and later released in a hostage-ceasefire deal. Inside Gaza, Hamas is also trying to reassert welfare-control legitimacy through a structured 500-shekel grant program for widows of Oct. 7–Jan. 21 war dead and families of prisoners—bureaucracy as intimidation with a dash of slay-for-pay.

ASSESSMENT

One of the West's favorite hallucinations. Pretend governance is a staffing chart while the real government is whoever owns rifles and the willingness to go door to door. "Heavy weapons first" is not a mere photo-op that preserves Hamas's coercive monopoly. A terror regime can run Gaza with AKs, clan enforcement, and selective executions. Rockets are for leverage, rifles are for rule. The insertion of foreign peacekeepers and private contractors into that environment—without a mandate and appetite to physically disarm Hamas—doesn't change the equation for the better. Add militias running Rafah and you get stuck with an Iraq-style patchwork authority. The World Vision document trail is a punchline to the NGO sanctimony cycle. Hamas didn't just siphon aid, it policed the aid workers, hunted whistleblowers, and ran counter-witness operations like a state security service. If Israel lets "managed disarmament" become the international consensus, it will wake up to a Gaza where Hamas's rockets are reduced, Hamas's rifles are intact, and Israel's freedom of action is fenced in by foreign bodies.

From Jenin To The Gas Rigs, Israel Tightens The Perimeter

The IDF was far from idle. The Navy completed a large multi-day drill integrating missile boats, submarines, patrol units, unmanned surface vessels, Shayetet 13, Air Force support, and C4I/cyber elements—training against seaborne infiltrations, aerial threats, multi-front maritime combat, and defense of strategic offshore assets including natural gas platforms, ports, and critical coastal infrastructure. A parallel drill set scenarios around a potential sea-borne incursion toward Eilat. The operational emphasis was shaped by intelligence gained from the capture and interrogation of a senior Hezbollah maritime figure, Imad Amhaz, described as central to Hezbollah's covert maritime program and tied to land-to-sea missile and disguised civilian/merchant-vessel attack concepts against Israeli and international targets. On the northern front, the IDF struck and eliminated a Hezbollah operative in the At-Tiri area involved in attempts to reestablish infrastructure, framed as another ceasefire-violation removal. The IDF also had to divert forces to handle a group of Israeli civilians gathered near the Israel–Lebanon border, with two crossing into Lebanon near Yir'on before troops located and returned them. In Judea and Samaria, counterterror pressure continued: ISA-guided Yamam and IDF forces arrested Muhammad Zidan in Jenin, described as an aide to the perpetrator of the January 6, 2025 Al Funduq shooting that killed three Israelis. Separately, the IDF concluded a broad sweep across 12 villages in the Menashe sector, detaining Hamas/PIJ-linked suspects, questioning additional individuals on terror and illegal-entry lanes, seizing suspected terror funds and firearms (including M4-type and Kalashnikovs in recoveries across brigades), demolishing illegal structures in Barta'a, and confiscating dozens of stolen vehicles.

ASSESSMENT

Hezbollah has spent years trying to turn “civilian” maritime activity into a camouflage layer. Gas rigs are strategic leverage nodes—strikeable, symbolically juicy, and capable of turning a war into a blackout. The Navy’s training posture says Israel is building a kill-box that starts well before the coastline. The Jenin arrest and the Menashe sweep underline the boring truth: the next attack chain is usually financed, staged, and moved through ordinary criminal logistics until it becomes a headline. Israel’s job is to keep that arena haemorrhaging—money seized, guns pulled, vehicles taken, suspects in custody—so that the enemy spends its time rebuilding cells instead of executing attacks.

Trump Signals A One-Month Clock While Tehran Pours Concrete

The U.S. ordered the USS Gerald R. Ford toward the Middle East and signaled an expanded naval posture alongside the USS Abraham Lincoln, with Trump publicly framing negotiations as needing to conclude “over the next month” and warning of a “phase two” that would be “very tough” if no acceptable deal emerges—while also urging Netanyahu not to “surprise” him (interpreted as a warning against an Israeli preemptive move outside coordination). Netanyahu, returning home, reiterated that any agreement must cover not only the nuclear program but also Iran’s ballistic missiles and proxies. Regional posture signals widened. Jordan indicated it would allow use of its land and airspace in the event of a U.S. and Israeli attack on Iran. European aviation authorities advised airlines to avoid Iranian airspace through March 31. And reporting described covert U.S. shipment of thousands of Starlink terminals into Iran after a crackdown and internet shutdown—suggesting Washington is preparing for internal unrest and communications denial as part of the confrontation picture. Satellite reporting flagged intensified activity at the tunnel complex near Natanz (Pickaxe Mountain), including heavy equipment, concrete pouring at entrances, and compaction work—hardening and buildout behavior.

ASSESSMENT

If missiles and proxies remain outside the scope of rollback, then “agreement” is paperwork over a weapons factory. Bibi knows it. Let’s see if he has convinced DJT. Trump’s one-month framing is ok if it produces real movement—not an extension dressed up as “progress.” The Starlink delivery shows Washington is preparing to contest an internal repression cycle and information control environment as part of escalation management.

Inside Israel

Levin Standoff Turns Reform Fight Into Criminal-Justice Breakdown

The High Court tore into Justice Minister Yariv Levin for refusing to convene the Judicial Selection Committee, warning that the judge shortage is now breaking core criminal procedure. One justice said he had to release multiple defendants accused of murder to house arrest because there weren’t panels available to run hearings, calling it an outright crisis—especially in the violence-heavy South and the overloaded Beersheba District Court. The

attorney general backed a petition seeking to compel Levin to convene the committee immediately, as the courts administration and prosecutors cited roughly 150 unfilled judicial roles (about 15% of the system). Levin's position remains that appointments require broad consensus, and that his convening authority was meant to introduce ideological diversity, not rubber-stamp the old pipeline. The court signaled it may issue a conditional order demanding Levin justify continued inaction, possibly granting only a short window for negotiations before forcing movement.

ASSESSMENT

This is what happens when a structural reform agenda gets turned into a functional hostage situation. Criminals get breathing room. Victims get lectures. And the High Court gets a public-safety cudgel to expand its own leverage. Levin is right that the appointments mechanism was built to reproduce a worldview. He is wrong to let the system visibly fail in a way that hands his opponents an easy, indefensible PR win. Murderers released because the minister wouldn't convene a meeting. Convene the committee, fill lower courts fast, and fight the long war over the ruleset in the next Knesset.

Police Crackdowns Expand As Top Brass Face Obstruction Charges

Police escalated their Arab-sector crackdown under a focused raid campaign that has now produced over 200 arrests and the seizure of roughly 200 illegal weapons—pistols, rifles, and explosives—alongside arrests tied to shootings, extortion, and violent crime. Three suspects were arrested for a Bedouin-village murder, and another arrest surfaced the kind of casual insanity that now passes for “routine”—a driver allegedly smoking marijuana at the wheel with an M16 under the backseat, and no valid license. At the same time, the state's internal-security leadership remains in disarray. Prosecutors and the AG set a three-week deadline for Prison Service chief Kobi Yaakobi to schedule a hearing as they consider indicting him for breach of trust and obstruction over suspicions he tipped off a senior detective—later indicted—about a covert probe into allegedly sabotaged investigations. The minister responsible publicly framed the case as persecution of officials implementing government policy.

ASSESSMENT

Israel is trying to reassert authority with raids and seizures—good, finally—and simultaneously undermining it by turning senior security offices into factional trenches. You cannot tell the public “rule of law” is sacred while the system's top echelon trades accusations of obstruction and selective enforcement like 1950s American kids traded baseball cards. If Yaakobi obstructed a probe, that's not “policy implementation.” And should be treated accordingly. If prosecutions are being used to preempt the agenda of elected officials, that's also sabotage—and isn't acceptable. It's past time for people to grow up and set aside petty differences for the good of the country. The Arab-sector weapons reality is a parallel arms market that will eventually feed terror, intimidation, and political veto power.

Local Governments Fill Shabbat Mobility Gap While Flights Stay Expensive

For the first time, a direct public-transport link to Ben Gurion Airport will operate on Shabbat as Route 711—run under the municipal “Na’im Busofash” network—adds a stop at Terminal 1 on weekends, with onward transfer via the Airports Authority’s free internal shuttles to Terminal 3. Service is slated at roughly one bus every 2–3 hours with 17 trips per weekend—funded by 12 local authorities and offered free of charge. The move is a concrete workaround to Israel’s national Shabbat transit vacuum—rooted in long-standing state restrictions that effectively shut most buses and trains on the day of rest—while municipal systems (Na’im Busofash, and similar local models elsewhere) keep expanding due to proven demand and rising ridership expectations in 2026. The government also advanced a second “mobility” lever through aviation competition: an inter-ministerial committee approved allowing Wizz Air to establish an operational base in Israel, explicitly framed as a competition and cost-of-living move, after internal disputes in which the transportation ministry’s leadership accused the Civil Aviation Authority of resisting steps that would increase supply and lower prices.

ASSESSMENT

Shabbat airport transit will now run because local leaders treated it like a service problem instead of a theology war—and because the public is tired of a country where planes land but buses disappear. Add Wizz Air basing approval and you can see the governing instinct trying to re-emerge: increase competition, lower costs, normalize life.

Israel and the World

Capitol Hill’s Israel Consensus Faces Primary Season Stress Test

Congress moved to institutionalize the relationship between Washington and Jerusalem. A bipartisan, bicameral FUTURES Act was introduced to accelerate joint defense R&D, testing, and industrial cooperation across missile defense, counter-UAS, anti-tunnel capabilities, and emerging technologies (explicitly including AI and biotech). Texas doubled its Israel bond holdings to a record \$280 million and is advancing plans for a Texas Israel Office in Jerusalem. All the while U.S. Democratic primary politics continue to rot the floorboards. The open Illinois 9th District race is turning into an AIPAC vs. new “PAL PAC” showdown, with a pro-Palestinian influencer candidate accusing Israel of “genocide,” a Jewish progressive mayor pledging to reject AIPAC support and oppose additional Israel aid, and a pro-Israel state senator positioned as the alternative. One additional signal from inside the Republican lane: a GOP senator on Foreign Relations said he will oppose Trump’s nominee for the international organizations portfolio over anti-Israel views and past remarks minimizing the Holocaust—an unusual speed bump in an otherwise compliant confirmation pipeline.

ASSESSMENT

For Israel, U.S. politics are becoming less reliable by the month. The Democratic primary ecosystem is incubating a new class of candidates who treat “genocide” as campaign currency and “aid to Israel” as a moral sin. If Israel wants strategic continuity, it needs to bank hard capabilities (co-development, production depth, stockpiles, redundancy) now—before Congressional theater becomes a chokepoint. The Foreign Relations nomination fight is a reminder that even a pro-Israel administration can still nominate a liability—because, depending on the user, bureaucracy is where foreign policy goes to be quietly sabotaged or quietly saved.

Britain’s Court-Activist Feedback Loop Weakens Enforcement And Targets Israel

Britain’s pro-Gaza direct-action ecosystem is colliding with governance. Senior investors and politicians warned that violent activism—bank vandalism, raids on defense factories, and escalating marches—has been met with weak enforcement and is actively deterring investment and job creation. The Court ruled the Home Office’s proscription of Palestine Action as a terrorist organization was unlawful and disproportionate, arguing only a small portion of the group’s conduct met the statutory terrorism definition and that ordinary criminal law remained available for the rest. The court signaled it will quash the proscription decision while temporarily keeping the group proscribed to allow further arguments and give the government time to pursue an appeal. In parallel, the UN Secretary-General escalated the UNRWA issue directly at Netanyahu, threatening legal proceedings that could reach the International Court of Justice over Israel’s demolition of UNRWA’s Jerusalem compound—claiming Israel seized and damaged UN property, disrupted UNRWA facilities and utilities, and violated UN privileges and immunities. Notwithstanding Israel’s law ending UNRWA activity in sovereign Israel. In New York City, a visibly Jewish university student was attacked by a masked group in a subway station blind spot with no cameras or police presence.

ASSESSMENT

This is the Western self-crippling pattern in miniature: tolerate intimidation until it becomes a cost center, then argue about whether tools for enforcement are “proportionate,” and in the same breath hand Israel a new legal noose because it refuses to keep subsidizing hostile infrastructure. Britain is discovering—late—that activists who feel immune don’t just chant. They break things. Paralyze roads. And turn defense supply chains into public sport. The court decision is going to be read by the public as a green light, because the key lesson extremists take from judicial nuance is always the same: the state is hesitant. Meanwhile, the UN is doing what it does: converting “international law” into a pressure instrument to protect a UN bureaucracy’s footprint, regardless of how badly that bureaucracy has been implicated in the ecosystem that produced October 7. Israel should force the argument onto sovereign control, facilities security, and the consequences of granting quasi-immunity to institutions that function as terror actors in a war zone. And when a Jewish kid gets jumped in a “blind spot” in Washington Heights, you don’t really need another reminder that the chant-to-clipboard-to-courtroom pipeline reliably ends with somebody feeling licensed to get physical.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

Jerusalem Post: The IDF released body-cam footage from Shayetet 13 showing the February 2024 rescue of hostages Fernando Marman and Luis Har in Rafah, including their first moments aboard the evacuation helicopter. The video is strategic memory management — a reminder that precision raids, not press conferences, brought Israelis home from Hamas captivity.

Culture, Religion & Society

Algemeiner: Israeli athletes won multiple gold medals in international judo and MMA competitions across Europe, while windsurfer Sharon Kantor took silver and Israeli Olympians competed in Milan's Winter Games. Even as parts of the world try to sideline Israel diplomatically, its flag keeps rising — and "Hatikvah" keeps playing — on global podiums.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

JTA: The International Federation of Social Workers is set to vote on expelling Israel's social workers union after Ireland, Spain, and Greece accused it of failing to oppose the war or seek military exemptions for members. An attempt to impose collective punishment on Israelis through professional bodies when battlefield outcomes prove harder to manipulate.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Border Freelancing Sparks Risk** — A group of Israeli civilians gathered near Yir'on and two briefly crossed into Lebanon before being retrieved by the IDF.
- **At-Tiri Kill-Chain Continues** — The IDF eliminated another Hezbollah operative rebuilding infrastructure in At-Tiri— a ceasefire violation response.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Yellow Line Zero Tolerance** — IDF troops struck a structure east of the Yellow Line after identifying two terrorists entering it in northern Gaza. The buffer is live fire space, not a debate club, and any Hamas probe will be answered immediately.
- **Hamas Welfare Optics Rollout** — Hamas began distributing 500-shekel grants to "war widows" and prisoner families just as technocratic governance talk inches forward. It's patronage-as-sovereignty—cementing loyalty before any foreign committee sets foot in Gaza.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Two-Carrier Window Opens** — The USS Gerald R. Ford is heading to join the USS Abraham Lincoln, marking the first dual-carrier presence since early in the war.
- **Natanz Hardening Accelerates** — Satellite imagery shows reinforced concrete and tunnel fortification work intensifying at the Pickaxe Mountain complex near Natanz.
- **Jordan Airspace Signal** — Amman publicly indicated it would allow use of its territory and airspace in the event of U.S.–Israeli action on Iran. That widens operational geometry—and Tehran’s retaliation map.
- **Starlink Flood Into Iran** — The U.S. covertly moved roughly 6,000 Starlink terminals into Iran after the regime’s internet blackout. Washington is preparing for unrest contingencies while negotiating, which tells you this isn’t just a centrifuge discussion.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **EASA Airspace Warning** — The EU Aviation Safety Agency advised airlines to avoid Iranian airspace through March 31.
- **Citizenship Revocations for Iran Spies** — Israel is preparing proceedings to strip citizenship from individuals accused of spying for Iran, explicitly including Jewish Israelis.

Home Front & Politics

- **Wizz Air Base Approved** — The government approved Wizz Air establishing an operational base in Israel despite Civil Aviation Authority resistance.

Watch for Tehran to turn the region into a veto factory—retaliation threats, proxy noise, and “don’t you dare” messaging aimed at Gulf capitals and Washington alike. In Gaza, every foreign “supervision” concept will try to freeze Israel’s action while leaving Hamas with small arms, which is more than enough to rule by fear. At home, the judiciary fight is so far beyond theoretical its sickening. When murder suspects go home because the system can’t staff a panel, the state’s authority gets repossessed in public.

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.



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.

PASSED ALONG TO YOU?

The daily Israel Brief is free at mitzpe.org. The operational layer — Closed Dossiers, Vantage, and Watchwords — is members-only. Become a member, gift a membership, or book a briefing at mitzpe.org.

Reader Edition · Free to share with attribution to Mitzpe Institute.