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READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

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Friendly fire in Gaza. Friendly-ish fiction in Bnei Brak. Israel buries a soldier, tightens tunnels, and asks whether the state can govern itself as seriously as it governs a war.

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THE BOTTOM LINE When a public burning uses Jewish symbols and the defense is it was political satire, you're not watching folklore—you're watching a social rehearsal for exclusion wrapped in tradition so nobody has to take responsibility. Europe has become fluent in this trick: keep the aesthetics of civility, outsource the violence to symbolism, then act shocked when the symbolism trains the street. The U.S. restaurant harassment story is the same mechanism. Protest becomes intimidation, intimidation becomes community standards, and eventually a Jewish business closes because the state won't impose consequences on the people doing the threatening. The punchline is that the coalition claims to defend people of color while driving a Black Jewish refugee out of business. The West's institutional immune system has failed. Antisemitism is increasingly expressed through bureaucratic permission and public performance rather than explicit policy.

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Flash Brief

- **Khan Yunis:** Staff Sgt. Ofri Yafe, 21, killed in friendly fire during nighttime building-clearing operations.
- **Rafah:** IDF destroys another Hamas tunnel under armored and engineering coordination.
- **Kiryat Gat:** Authorities probe attempted bribery at US Gaza logistics coordination site—tied to reconstruction flow.
- **Jericho:** Four Islamic State-affiliated suspects arrested in pre-Ramadan counterterror operations.
- **Ramallah:** ISA-guided forces detain weapons dealer embedded in local terror network.
- **Geneva:** Iran floats three-year enrichment suspension, rejects dismantlement and missile limits.
- **High Court:** Ministries ordered to justify full funding of noncompliant Haredi school networks by April 15.

The War Today

Yellow Line Enforcement Continues As Rear-Area Corruption Creeps In

Overnight operations in the Khan Yunis yellow line sector resulted in a loss. Staff Sgt. Ofri Yafe, a twenty-one year-old Paratroopers reconnaissance fighter, was killed in a friendly fire incident during nighttime building-search and clearance activity near buffer-zone outposts after one IDF element misidentified another and opened small-arms fire. The IDF has opened an investigation. Forces continued engineering-led tunnel denial in Rafah, destroying another Hamas tunnel in an operation involving armored and engineering elements. Security officials are probing allegations of bribes of foreign personnel at a U.S.-run coordination headquarters in Kiryat Gat to smuggle prohibited goods into Gaza—an apparent sequel to recent indictments in a separate smuggling case involving high-value contraband (cigarettes, electronics, communications gear, parts).

ASSESSMENT

Gaza's buffer-zone raids are routine until they aren't, and friendly fire should still be avoidable even when running tight night cycles in cluttered terrain with layered forces doing similar tasks in adjacent grids. Meanwhile, the Kiryat Gat bribery allegation is a quiet scandal with sharp long-term implications. If criminals can buy their way into a foreign-staffed logistics node, then Gaza's rehabilitation lane becomes an import pipeline for dual-use goods, profit, and leverage—exactly the ecosystem Hamas taxes, polices, and converts into coercive capacity. Nothing says we learned nothing like letting a reconstruction bureaucracy become a smuggling surface. We don't need another UNRWA. Hamas doesn't need a port when it can corrupt the clipboard-class.

Judea And Samaria Interdictions Harden Ahead Of Ramadan Access Flow

Security forces rolled up two distinct threat enablers in Judea and Samaria as Ramadan approaches. Four Islamic State-affiliated suspects were arrested in Jericho across two raids, with authorities stating the cell was advancing terror activity and suspected of intending an attack. All were successfully transferred for interrogation. Separately, commandos detained a Ramallah-based weapons dealer embedded in a local terror network, arrested on intelligence guidance and moved for further questioning. These actions land alongside a calibrated Ramadan access posture: Israel is set to grant 10,000 entry permits for Friday prayers in Jerusalem during Ramadan (under age and security-screening criteria). Israel is widening friction against jihadist cells and supply chains at the exact moment it's deliberately widening controlled movement to prevent the holiday from becoming an ignition mechanism.

ASSESSMENT

Ramadan is when the street gets further weaponized and rumor becomes a tactical asset. The real fight is not the permits for entry—it's what slips in behind the human flow. Money. Guns. Recruiters. Bored young men who think a knife is destiny. Jericho's yielding up of an ISIS-branded cell is a warning that jihad isn't a single franchise—it's an operating code that migrates toward any gap in enforcement and any season of heightened emotion. The Ramallah weapons-dealer grab will stop attacks by choking the supply chain and making procurement feel hunted.

Inside Israel

Coalition's Haredi Bargain Meets Courts, Budgets, And A Second Legal System

The High Court issued a conditional order demanding the Education and Finance ministries explain why they fully fund the two main party-affiliated Haredi school networks despite systemic noncompliance with core curriculum requirements. The High Court also questioned the state's soft self-reporting oversight and lack of real-time monitoring or penalties—requiring a sworn response by April 15. A new fiscal mapping study says the state's transfer system now produces an almost 15,000-shekel monthly net gap between an average Haredi household (net receiver) and a non-Haredi Jewish household (net payer). The issue, according to the study, is structural and explicitly tied to education, labor-force participation, benefits design, and service burden. The coalition also advanced the rabbinical courts arbitration bill out of committee. The bill would expand rabbinical courts' ability—by consent—to arbitrate certain civil disputes (explicitly including child custody), even as opponents warned about coercion-by-community-pressure, lack of civil-law training among rabbinical judges, and predictable harm to women.

ASSESSMENT

A society that funds mass education without basic competencies is not preserving tradition—it's manufacturing dependency and then billing the productive public to keep the machine humming. The coalition's response to the Court's pressure—expanding rabbinical-court jurisdiction under the fairy tale of fully voluntary consent—doesn't relieve pressure. It merely creates a second legal class that will quietly swallow disputes the moment a family, a landlord, or a business partner is told sign, or you're disloyal. The fix isn't another committee. It's attaching state money to measurable standards, ending the self-reporting farce, and designing service and employment pathways.

Bennett Signals Break From Bibi As Election Physics Harden

The election shadow got sharper as Naftali Bennett, speaking to major Diaspora Jewish leadership in Jerusalem, implied—more directly than before—that he will not sit under Benjamin Netanyahu. He called Israel's current leadership “failed and divisive.” He argued a leader must know when to step aside after the greatest disaster on his watch. Positioning himself as the alternative next chapter, even while the opposition math still struggles to replace the coalition without Arab-party reliance that Bennett and others publicly veto. Inside the Knesset, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich detonated a confrontation with Arab lawmakers during a Finance Committee debate—nominally over a proposed 1.5% tax on vacant land and the 2026 budget reform package—by rejecting the framing that the government alone is responsible for spiraling violence in Arab society and demanding Arab political leaders explicitly condemn terror and define Hamas as a terrorist organization. That exchange landed amid fresh 2026 homicide figures (51 Arab Israelis killed so far this year) and a decade-long organized-crime surge that has become a standing indictment of state governance.

ASSESSMENT

Bennett's move is not some grand moral awakening, just a stab at some math. He's trying to sell a responsible leadership narrative to Diaspora—while carving out room to inherit the anti-Netanyahu bloc without being strangled by its own red lines. The problem is reality. If you refuse dependence (rightly) on the current Arab parties and you refuse Netanyahu... you'd better have a coalition map that exists. Currently, there's no sign of such a thing. Meanwhile Smotrich is doing something the system tends to avoid. Forcing Arab political leadership to stop outsourcing responsibility for violence and also demanding they meet the baseline civilizational requirement. Namely to be willing to call Hamas a jihadi terror group. The opposition screams racism because it's easier than confronting the community power structures that tolerate mafia capture and the elected officials who still support Hamas.

State Comptroller Flags Gas-And-Fuel Continuity As A Wartime Weak Spot

A state audit on emergency readiness warned Israel lacks an onshore strategic natural-gas storage reservoir and has no clear rules for prioritizing gas supply during shortages—despite relying on offshore gas for over 40% of energy and roughly 70% of electricity, and despite two conflict-driven interruptions in the last two years. The report also said the Natural Gas Authority still hasn't finalized detailed policy principles for storage, and flagged legal

gaps limiting the Energy Ministry's ability to supervise power plants or ensure essential staffing during crisis. The audit also highlighted other wartime dependencies. When gas runs short Israel falls back on imported coal and diesel, and over-relies on Haifa's Bazan refinery—which itself took a missile hit during the June 2025 war, killing three workers and halting production—while also supplying a large share of liquefied petroleum gas used for heating/cooking. Against that backdrop, the comptroller recommended reexamining the 2022 government decision to shutter Bazan by decade's end as part of Haifa Bay redevelopment, warning closure could concentrate up to 80% of LPG imports with a single importer. The comptroller's office is demanding continuity planning, while the Haifa Bay redevelopment authority argued the import market would attract more suppliers once Bazan closes and pointed to delayed inter-ministerial regulations and land-access fights as blockers for emergency inventories and underground infrastructure.

ASSESSMENT

Energy resilience is deterrence. If the grid flickers when missiles fly, the home front becomes the front. Israel built a gas-powered electricity system for efficiency and cost, then discovered—shocked, apparently—that offshore platforms, chokepoints, and refineries are exactly what enemies like to hit because they turn war into daily life collapse. They're adequately protected. For now. But that's not enough. The comptroller is bluntly describing a doctrinal failure. Israel has war plans for battalions, but not enough enforceable plans for electrons and fuel. The Haifa Bay dream is fine—redevelop, clean up, build a metropolis—but you don't retire strategic industrial capacity on a politician's timeline when the region is still abuzz with missiles. If Bazan must close, then storage, redundancy, import diversification, protected infrastructure, and emergency prioritization rules must exist first, not as a PowerPoint promise after the ribbon-cutting.

Israel and the World

Iran Floats a Pause, Keeps Missiles Holy, Courts Moscow Anyway

U.S.–Iran talks in Geneva ended after nearly three hours with both sides claiming progress and agreeing to reconvene within two weeks. Iran floated a three-year enrichment suspension and exporting its stockpile of >400 kg highly enriched uranium abroad in exchange for major sanctions relief and even U.S.–Iran business deals—but still refused to dismantle its program and signaled again that missile limits are off-limits. U.S. leadership publicly framed the gap as Iran refusing to acknowledge Trump's red lines. Tehran paired diplomacy with escalation choreography. IRGC naval drills in the Strait of Hormuz featuring missile launches, mine-laying, and simulated tanker interdiction. Tehran also claims it can operationally implement the Supreme Leader's threats against Washington. In parallel, indicators of late-stage U.S. air-ops preparation mounted, including multiple AWACS deployments from the U.S. to Europe (with onward expected movement toward the region), reports of additional fighters and support aircraft moving, and Israeli preparations for home-front missile/drone attack scenarios being briefed at the

highest levels. Russia moved to thicken Tehran's survivability by announcing joint naval drills in the Sea of Oman/northern Indian Ocean and sending a hardened airborne command-post aircraft to Tehran ahead of them. Reports inside Iran described shooting at civilians at a memorial gathering in Abadan—another sign the regime is still treating domestic unrest as a battlefield and killing civilians. An Iranian diaspora activist, operating out of London, described escalating risk even abroad from regime-linked networks and Palestine laundering—support for the Islamic Republic framed as defending Islam.

ASSESSMENT

Iran's offer is a classic regime trade. Freeze the headline (enrichment) temporarily, keep the machine (missiles, doctrine, IRGC power) permanently, and demand sanctions relief now. A three-year pause is a runway—time to re-harden, reconstitute procurement, and let international attention drift back to its usual hobby horses. The Hormuz drills aren't military necessity. They're a financial instrument—press the oil-market panic button so allies beg Washington to de-escalate, then cash the fear into concessions. Moscow wants Iran functional enough to keep the West busy and energy markets nervous, and Tehran wants Moscow's strategic umbrella to complicate Western decision-making. Meanwhile, the regime's domestic posture—shooting at crowds—signals fear of its own population more than fear of foreign aircraft. It's trying to survive two wars at once: the external pressure campaign and the internal legitimacy collapse. Israel's core interest is unchanged: no nuclear-only paper outcome that leaves the missile factory intact and then treats Israeli civil defense as an acceptable externality. If the U.S. wants red lines to mean anything, it has to enforce them in the one language Tehran actually reads: cost, capability destruction, and time denied.

Board of Peace Goes Live as Israel's Critics Weaponize Munich

Israel's foreign minister is set to travel to the United States to represent Israel at the inaugural Washington summit of the Board of Peace and then to a UN Security Council session in New York on Middle East developments. The Board's backers tout more than \$5B pledged for Gaza reconstruction and humanitarian efforts alongside commitments of thousands of personnel toward a UN-authorized stabilization force and a local Gaza police concept. The forum's gravity is already producing allied political friction. Italy opted to attend as an observer while domestic opponents attacked the body as legally and constitutionally awkward and as an end-run around UN primacy. Prominent U.S. progressive figures used the Munich Security Conference to push conditioning aid and repeat genocide language, with one emphasizing U.S. legal restrictions as justification and another depicting Gaza's ceasefire reality primarily through Israeli response while omitting Hamas's continued non-compliance and violations. Former Israeli leadership warned of a new Turkish threat, casting Ankara—working in tandem with Qatar—as the sponsor of a Muslim Brotherhood-derived encirclement strategy through Syria, Gaza, and broader influence operations. Ankara, meanwhile, tightened its trade embargo by halting issuance of key Pan-Euro-Med origin certificates that enable goods routed via Europe to receive customs exemptions into Israel—raising costs and complicating supply chains.

ASSESSMENT

The Board of Peace is a governance structure that tries to substitute money, uniforms, and acronyms for the one thing Gaza actually runs on—coercive monopoly of force. A stabilization force and local police can supervise lines and distribute aid. Fine. They cannot disarm a jihadist regime unless they are built, mandated, and psychologically prepared to confiscate rifles. This one, like previous attempts, isn't going to hit that mark. Europe's observer posture is telling you that they want influence without responsibility, and they want Israel constrained without anyone else doing the dirty work. Munich's progressive theater shows the conditioning-aid campaign is not an analysis of war aims. Just another domestic political sorting mechanism—with Israel as the sacrifice that proves ideological purity to a faction that increasingly treats foreign policy as a feelings-based referendum. Bennett's framing may be rhetorically sharp, but it isn't wrong. Ankara and Doha don't need to outshoot Iran to be strategically dangerous—they just need to build a Sunni political-ideological corridor that launders jihadism as legitimate resistance.

Europe Plays with Effigies; America Harasses Restaurants

In Andorra, a centuries-old carnival ritual detonated into an international scandal after organizers used an Israel-themed effigy marked with Jewish symbolism, staged a mock trial, and hanged, shot, and burned it in public with local officials present. Prompting condemnations from European Jewish bodies and warnings that such spectacle normalizes incitement in a climate already saturated with post-Oct. 7 hostility. In the United States, an Ethiopian-Israeli, Black Jewish-owned cafe in Harlem reported it can no longer function amid sustained harassment and smears tied to being an Israeli restaurant. Echoing a pattern of mob-driven economic warfare targeting kosher and Israeli-linked businesses across the globe. The same cultural permission structure bled into elite discourse. U.S. political infighting around Epstein class rhetoric generated waves of conspiratorial insinuation—explicitly repackaging old tropes about Jewish power and Israel—while activists and institutions increasingly treat Jewish visibility as provocation rather than a protected norm.

ASSESSMENT

When a public burning uses Jewish symbols and the defense is it was political satire, you're not watching folklore—you're watching a social rehearsal for exclusion wrapped in tradition so nobody has to take responsibility. Europe has become fluent in this trick: keep the aesthetics of civility, outsource the violence to symbolism, then act shocked when the symbolism trains the street. The U.S. restaurant harassment story is the same mechanism. Protest becomes intimidation, intimidation becomes community standards, and eventually a Jewish business closes because the state won't impose consequences on the people doing the threatening. The punchline is that the coalition claims to defend people of color while driving a Black Jewish refugee out of business. The West's institutional immune system has failed. Antisemitism is increasingly expressed through bureaucratic permission and public performance rather than explicit policy.

Briefly Noted

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- Economy Minister Nir Barkat proposed replacing the Palestinian Authority with a Hebron-based Emirates model of local Arab autonomies that recognize Israel, join the Abraham Accords, and scrap Oslo. A post-Oslo architecture that sidelines Ramallah, bets on city-level alliances, and dares Washington to choose between a failed PA and dealmaking sheikhs.
- A Kurdish leader in northeastern Syria urged Israel to back Kurdish political efforts, arguing the only way to topple Iran's regime is from within and that Kurdish regions span Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran. He's pitching a strategic trade: Israeli lobbying muscle for Kurdish leverage against Tehran — a pressure point missiles can't reach.

Culture, Religion & Society

- Israel's two-man bobsleigh team finished 26th and last in their Olympic heat, then celebrated like they'd medaled and turned to the upcoming four-man race. Call it Shul Runnings — in a winter sport with no tradition or budget, showing up under fire and flying the flag is the point.
- Hamas-linked Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor launched a Gaza program training young Palestinians to edit and seed Wikipedia entries about the war with genocide narratives in Arabic and English.
- Iran's HispanTV is flooding Latin America with antisemitic conspiracies, Oct. 7 glorification, and praise for Hamas and Hezbollah, reaching hundreds of millions of Spanish speakers. Tehran is building an ideological beachhead far from the Levant, priming a hemisphere with Jew-hate while Western governments look away.
- Three Israelis were attacked and chased in Thailand after being overheard speaking Hebrew.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **PIJ Transit Corridor Hit** — The IDF's Majdal Anjar strike targeted PIJ operatives moving from Lebanon into Syria after advancing attacks from Lebanese territory.
- **Lebanon-Syria Transfer Interdiction** — Israel publicly signaled continued action to block weapons/terrorist transfers on the Lebanon-Syria border.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Rafah Tunnel Denial Continues** — Another Hamas tunnel was destroyed in Rafah under armored/engineering lead. The near-term risk is Hamas shifting to smaller, harder-to-detect shafts and booby-trap patterns to impose casualties and slow the clearance clock.

- **Reconstruction Node Corruption Probe** — Attempts to bribe foreign personnel at a U.S.-run coordination HQ tied to Gaza rehab logistics point to an emerging smuggling-by-clipboard lane.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Two-Week Window Becomes Spoiler Season** — Geneva talks ended with agreement to meet again within two weeks and Iran floating a three-year enrichment pause plus uranium transfer for sanctions relief.
- **Late-Stage Air Campaign Indicators** — Multiple AWACS deployments toward Europe (with onward movement expected), reports of fighters moving, and broader enabling posture are stacking around the theater.
- **Hormuz Drill as Market Weapon** — IRGC drills in the Strait of Hormuz include missile launches, mine-laying, and tanker interdiction scenarios. Tehran is trying to turn oil traders into its lobbyists by spiking risk premiums on command.
- **Russia-Iran Coordination Signal** — Joint naval drills in the Sea of Oman plus a Russian airborne command-post arrival in Tehran reads like continuity-of-government and coordination rehearsal. Moscow wants Tehran hard enough to keep the West distracted; Tehran wants Moscow's shadow to complicate targeting and response math.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Board of Peace Summit Tripwire** — Israel's FM heads to Washington for the inaugural Board of Peace summit as the forum touts billions pledged and personnel for a stabilization force and local Gaza police.
- **Ramadan Access, Documented Returns** — Israel will grant 10,000 permits for Palestinians to leave Judea and Samaria and enter Israel proper for Friday prayers during Ramadan.

Home Front & Politics

- **Core-Studies Funding Deadline** — The High Court ordered the Education/Finance ministries to justify full funding of noncompliant Haredi school networks, with an April 15 sworn response deadline.
- **Bnei Brak Prosecution Barometer** — Prior briefings flagged riots and releases; the near-term pivot is whether prosecutors move from statements to indictments on organizers and repeat inciters. If the state blinks again, the lesson spreads: blocking roads and torching property is a negotiation tactic, not a crime.

Closing

START with Gaza.

Staff Sgt. Ofri Yafe, was killed because one unit misidentified another in a tight night grid. It is a tragedy and a systems failure. The investigation must produce procedural changes, not condolences alone.

The tunnel campaign continues because Hamas still lives underground. Every shaft destroyed reduces maneuver space. Every shaft missed preserves it. The 60-day clock does not change the geometry beneath the sand.

Now Iran.

Tehran offers a three-year pause and keeps its missile arsenal sacred. That's not compromise. That's a sabbatical to reload underground. Meanwhile AWACS move, fighters reposition, and submarines reportedly patrol with Tomahawks ready. Iran knows it. Russia knows it. The next two weeks will be home to escalation math.

And at home.

The High Court demanded an explanation for funding Haredi school networks that refuse core curriculum standards while receiving full state budgets. A new fiscal mapping shows a roughly 15,000-shekel monthly net gap between an average Haredi household and a non-Haredi Jewish household. Add the rabbinical courts arbitration expansion—civil matters, including custody, adjudicated under consent that everyone knows can be communal pressure in a black hat.

You cannot build a larger army, expand divisions, fight on multiple fronts, and then run a parallel society that declines math, declines to serve, declines labor participation, and then demands more and more money from everyone else. You cannot chant unity while torching police vehicles and then cry persecution when someone suggests learning a bit of algebra.

Torah study is sacred. So is national survival. One does not cancel the other. Entitlement dressed as piety is not holiness—it's a desecration.

The argument in *From Deferment to Duty* was written before the frustration reached this pitch. The argument stands. Attach funding to standards. Design real service pathways. End the self-reporting farce. If the coalition wants to prove it governs, here's its exam.

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